
GHC

GEORGIA HIGHLANDS COLLEGE

Georgia Highlands College Statutes

A Unit of the University System of Georgia

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INTRODUCTION

The Statutes of Georgia Highlands College set forth the philosophy, purposes, and governance of the College and outline the administrative structure for educational programs and support services.

The Statutes are in accordance with policies adopted by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG). In the case of any divergence from or conflict with the official Policies of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia found in these Statutes, the official Policies of the Board of Regents shall prevail.

The Georgia Highlands College Catalog, Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, and Employee Handbook provide detailed information about specific areas of operation within the College.

Georgia Highlands College is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity/Equal Access Institution.

ARTICLE I: THE COLLEGE

Mission Statement

The mission of Georgia Highlands College, a state college of the University System of Georgia, is to provide access to excellent educational opportunities for the intellectual, cultural, and physical development of a diverse population through pre-baccalaureate associate degree transfer programs, career associate degree programs, and targeted baccalaureate degree programs that meet the economic development needs of the region. To achieve this mission of being a gateway to success for students, Georgia Highlands College has articulated the following goals:

- 1) Effect quality teaching and learning focused on academic achievement and personal and professional growth.
- 2) Provide comprehensive student services that encourage and enable all students to be successful learners.
- 3) Engage students in a challenging atmosphere that prepares them for responsibility and leadership in an evolving global environment.
- 4) Utilize appropriate technologies to advance programs, services, and operations to support teaching and learning.
- 5) Maintain efficient and effective administrative services to support all programs of the College.
- 6) Foster community relationships that facilitate partnering for mutual success.

Section 1 – University System Bylaws and Policies

These Statutes are subordinate to the Bylaws and Policies of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia and amendments thereto hereafter adopted.

Section 2 – Institution of the University System

Georgia Highlands College serves as a point of access to higher education in Northwest Georgia. Founded in 1970 as a two-year institution of the University System of Georgia, the College is non-residential and has instruction locations in Rome, Cartersville, Marietta, Dallas, Douglasville, and online.

Since its conversion from a two-year to a four-year institution during the 2011 academic year, the College is designated as an “Associate Dominant, Select Bachelor’s” institution (*Board of*

Regents Policy, 2.8).¹ Georgia Highlands College adheres to the core mission statement for State Colleges as defined by the University System of Georgia. While these colleges embody common characteristics, variations exist in their purposes, histories, traditions, and settings, and each is allowed to focus on its distinctiveness and accomplishments.

The USG Core Characteristics for State Colleges include:

- A commitment to excellence and responsiveness within a scope of influence defined by needs of a local area and by particularly outstanding programs or distinctive characteristics with a magnet effect throughout the region or state;
- A commitment to a teaching/learning environment, both inside and outside the classroom that sustains instructional excellence functions to provide University System access for a diverse student body, and promotes high levels of student learning;
- A high-quality general education program that supports a variety of well-chosen associate programs and prepares students for baccalaureate programs, learning support programs designed to ensure access and opportunity for a diverse student body, and a limited number of certificate and other career programs to complement neighboring technical institute programs;
- A limited number of baccalaureate programs designed to meet the educational and economic development needs of the local area;
- A commitment to public service, continuing education, technical assistance, and economic development activities that address the needs, improve the quality of life, and raise the educational level within the state college's scope of influence;
- A commitment to scholarship and creative work to enhance instructional effectiveness and to encourage faculty scholarly pursuits; and
- A responsibility to address local needs through applied scholarship, especially in areas directly related to targeted baccalaureate degree programs.

Section 3 – Accreditation

The Commission may be contacted regarding concerns about possible significant College non-compliance with requirements or standards. Routine inquiries about the College (such as admissions requirements, financial aid, education programs, etc.) generally should be directed to the College rather than to the Commission.

¹ Institutions included in the Associate Dominant, Select Bachelor's state colleges group are characterized as offering associate-dominant programs and general education courses, with very few, select, professionally-oriented bachelor's degree programs. The select bachelor's programs are focused on specialized academic and economic development program areas and regional, college-educated workforce needs. The emphasis at these state colleges is on teaching and service with limited focus on basic or applied research.

Section 4 – Organization of the College

Georgia Highlands College is organized into these primary areas of responsibility under the supervision of the President (who is directly responsible to the Chancellor of the University System of Georgia) and under the leadership of the Vice Presidents:

- Academic Affairs
- Student Affairs
- Finance and Administration
- Information Technology
- Human Resources
- Advancement

Article II: ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

Section 1 – The President

The President shall be elected by the Board of Regents upon the recommendation of the Chancellor.

The President of Georgia Highlands College shall be the executive head of the institution and all its departments and shall exercise supervision and direction to promote the efficient operation of the institution. The President is responsible to the Chancellor for the operation and management of the institution and for the execution of all directives of the Board of Regents and the Chancellor. (*Board of Regents Policy 2.6.1*)

Additional guidelines are specified by the Board of Regents and can be viewed in the *Board of Regents Policy 2.6*.

Section 2 – The Vice Presidents

A. Vice President of Academic Affairs

The Vice President of Academic Affairs / Chief Academic Officer (VPAA) reports directly to the President and is responsible for the development, implementation, and management of the College's academic affairs operations. The VPAA oversees and develops academic policies and programs, provides guidance for the development of curricula and student learning outcomes, fosters academic excellence, oversees faculty performance evaluation including promotion and tenure, and manages the overall budget for all academic units.

B. Vice President of Student Affairs

The Vice President of Student Affairs (VPSA) reports directly to the President and is responsible for the development, implementation, and management of the College's student affairs and enrollment management operations. Areas under the VPSA include admissions, financial aid, registrar, student activities, student organizations, student support services, veterans' affairs, student conduct / Title IX, and intramural / extramural activities. The VPSA is also responsible for the administration of all policies of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia and Georgia Highlands College in managing enrollment and creating a campus culture that promotes the academic achievement and personal development of all students.

C. Vice President of Finance and Administration

The Vice President for Finance and Administration / Chief Financial Officer (CFO) reports directly to the President and is responsible for directing the College's financial and administrative functions. This position provides leadership for the College's fiscal affairs department, budget administration, procurement, campus safety, auxiliary services, and physical plant operations. The CFO has custody and control of all funds for Georgia Highlands College and serves as the principal financial advisor to the President in all policy decisions.

D. Vice President of Information Technology

The Vice President of Information Technology / Chief Information Officer (CIO) reports directly to the President and serves as the senior IT leader and oversees the central IT organization – Information Technology. This position is responsible for overseeing the technology operations of the College and directing the Information Technology Division, including the provision of Client Technology Services, Information Security and Network Services, Web Support Services, Enterprise Application Services, Audio Visual Services, and eLearning Support Services.

E. Vice President of Human Resources

The Vice President of Human Resources / Chief Human Resource Officer (VPHR) reports directly to the President and is responsible for the human resource functions of the College. The VPHR provides consultation to the President on topics related to the institution's human capital and provides leadership on matters of regulatory compliance, strategic planning, policy development, talent acquisition and development, compensation, staff performance management and other HR related areas. The position is also designated as the institution's Title IX Coordinator and Open Records Officer.

F. Vice President of Advancement

The Vice President of Advancement (VPA) reports directly to the President and is responsible for fostering the growth of College resources, strategic communications, and the ongoing management of the College image and brand as well as the fiscal soundness of the Georgia Highlands College Foundation. The VPA oversees those functions and activities that advance both the College's and Foundation's mission, protects and promotes its image, and articulates its vision to Foundation trustees,

alumni, legislators, donors, employees, the community, and other key stakeholders; and serves as the Executive Director of the Georgia Highlands College Foundation.²

Section 3 – Other Administrators Reporting Directly to the President

A. Dean of Planning, Assessment, Accreditation, and Research

The Dean of Planning, Assessment, Accreditation, and Research serves as the SACSCOC liaison and provides oversight and leadership for the institutional research and effectiveness activities of the College.

B. Campus Deans and Site Directors

Campus Deans and Site Directors are responsible for directing the daily operations of their assigned Georgia Highlands College Campus and Instructional Sites.

C. Director of Athletics

The Director of Athletics is responsible for the supervision of the Athletic Department staff and for the planning, staffing, and budgeting of the department.

D. Director of Internal Audit

The Director of Internal Audit is responsible for providing independent and objective assurance and advisory services in order assist management with risk management, compliance, and internal controls, while adding value and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of operations.

The President shall assign each officer's portfolio of responsibilities. All Vice Presidents and other administrative officers listed above serve at the pleasure of the President and perform an appropriate combination of college and community service activities.

NOTE: *Complete job descriptions for Vice Presidents and other administrative officers are available in the Office of Human Resources.*

²In accordance with the policies of the University System of Georgia Board of Regents, it is the mission of the Georgia Highlands College Foundation to effect a superior educational environment through philanthropic support of Georgia Highlands College and its educational curricula by securing resources to provide community awareness, community education and involvement, community service, and personal contact for financial support.

ARTICLE III: SHARED GOVERNANCE

Section 1 – President’s Cabinet

The administration shall be represented by The President’s Cabinet. The President’s Cabinet is advisory to the President and is responsible for the approvals of policies and procedures governing the management, operations, and strategic planning of the College. Policies and procedures adopted by the Cabinet shall be maintained in the Policy and Procedure Manual.

The President chairs the Cabinet. Its membership must include the Vice Presidents of the College; Academic Deans; Campus Deans; Dean of Planning, Assessment, Accreditation and Research; Site Directors; Director of Athletics; Director of Internal Audit; and the President of the Faculty Senate or their designee. Additional members who are directors or chairs at the College may be added or removed by the President. Such additions or removals must be shared widely through approved GHC communication channels.

Other persons may be asked to attend Cabinet meetings when deemed appropriate by the President. Minutes of Cabinet meetings shall be recorded by the Executive Assistant to the President and archived in accordance with USG Records Retention Schedule.

Section 2 – Faculty Senate

The faculty shall be represented by a Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate shall be formed by the Faculty Senate Bylaws, which are approved by an affirmative vote of the Senate, affirmative vote of the full faculty, and acceptance by the President (*Board of Regents Policy, 3.2.3*). The Faculty Senate shall have the power to adopt and amend bylaws governing its composition, organization, and procedures in a manner consistent with College Statutes. The bylaws may provide for standing and special committees as needed. The Faculty Senate shall be empowered to review the Standing Committees of the College and Standing Committees of the Faculty and to recommend changes to each Committee, subject to the approval of the Faculty Senate, Faculty, and with final approval of the President.

The Faculty Senate shall function in a cooperative capacity to the President of the College, as the official representative of the Faculty regarding all matters of importance to the Faculty or any other matters which the President brings before it.

The Bylaws of the Faculty Senate contain a full description of its responsibilities and organization.

Section 3 – Student Government Association

The students shall be represented by a Student Government Association. The Student Government Association, based on the authority granted by the College, shall strive to ensure democratic representation and governance, act as the voice for student concerns through service on college committees, disseminate relevant information to Georgia Highlands College students, assist in the allocation and approval of student activity funds, and promote campus pride and spirit on campus and in local communities around the College.

Any motion, recommendation, or proposal having been favorably recommended by the Student Government Association shall be forwarded to the appropriate administrator(s) for further discussion and approval.

The Bylaws of the Student Government Association contain a full description of its responsibilities and organization.

ARTICLE IV: THE FACULTY

Section 1 – Corps of Instruction

Full-time professors, associate professors, assistant professors, instructors, and teaching personnel with such other titles as may be approved by the Board shall be the Corps of Instruction. Full-time research and extension personnel and duly certified librarians will be included in the Corps of Instruction on the basis of comparable training. Persons holding part-time and adjunct appointments or other honorary titles shall not be considered to be members of the faculty. (*Board of Regents Policy 3.2.1.1*)

Full-time professors, associate professors, assistant professors, instructors, lecturers, senior lecturers, principal lecturers, and teaching personnel with such other titles as may be approved by the Board of Regents shall be hereafter referred to as teaching faculty. Duly certified librarians shall hereafter be referred to as library faculty. (*Board of Regents Policy 3.2.1.1*)

Section 2 – Administrators with Faculty Status

Administrative officers shall be appointed by the President of the institution and shall hold office at the pleasure of the President.

A faculty member who has academic rank and rights of tenure in the Corps of Instruction and who accepts an appointment to an administrative office, other than President, shall retain the responsibilities and privileges of faculty membership, his or her academic rank, and rights of tenure as an ex officio member of the Corps of Instruction, but shall have no rights of tenure in the administrative office to which he or she has been appointed.

The additional salary, if any, for the administrative position shall be stated in the employment contract and shall not be paid to the faculty member when he or she ceases to hold the administrative position. (*Board of Regents Policy 3.2.1.2*)

Section 3 – Other Faculty Members

In addition to the Corps of Instruction, the Faculty will consist of the President of the institution and other full-time administrative officers as the institution may designate as having ex officio faculty status. (*Board of Regents Policy 3.2.1.3*)

Section 4 – Faculty Meetings

General Faculty meetings will be held in August and January and will be scheduled by the President or the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Other meetings may be called as needed

by the President, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Instructional Council, or the Faculty Senate. Notice of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting shall be given each member of the Faculty at least seventy-two hours in advance of the proposed meeting.

A quorum of the Faculty shall consist of a majority of the Corps of Instruction. The Vice President for Academic Affairs, or their designee, acts as a presiding officer. The presiding officer shall determine if a quorum is present. The presence of a quorum shall be necessary for the conduct of any business of the Faculty.

Meetings shall comply with the Georgia Open Records Act and the Georgia Open Meetings Act. (*Board of Regents Policy 3.2.3*)

The presiding officer will provide a secretary who will take and archive the meeting minutes in accordance with USG Records Retention Schedule.

Section 5 – Academic Freedom

The College endorses the principles of academic freedom expressed in the *Statement on Academic Rights and Responsibilities* issued by the American Council on Education in 2005 and endorsed by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

Section 6 – Common Expectations of the Faculty

Faculty members at Georgia Highlands College are vital to achieving our educational mission and goals. As such, every faculty member is expected to engage in effective teaching, service to the college, and scholarship/professional development in accordance with SACSCOC, USG, and GHC policies and procedures. These standards require collegiality, inclusiveness, and professionalism.

A full description of the common expectations of the faculty can be found in the Faculty Handbook.

Section 7 – Promotion and Tenure

Teaching and Library Faculty shall engage in the promotion process at the College as defined by *Board of Regents Policy 8.3.6*. A full description of the promotion process is included in the Faculty Handbook.

Teaching and Library Faculty at the rank of Assistant Professor or higher shall engage in the tenure process at the College as defined by *Board of Regents Policy 8.3.7*. A full description of the tenure process is included in the Faculty Handbook.

ARTICLE V: COMMITTEES AND SPECIAL ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Section 1 – Standing Committees of the College

The Standing Committees of the College provide advice and counsel to the President and other administrative officers on a variety of topics that affect the College. A nomination committee of the Faculty Senate shall solicit nominees from the appropriate managers, Deans, or others as specified for each committee, solicit additional nominees as necessary, and assemble a list of nominations for all committees. A full description of the Standing Committees of the College can be found in the Faculty Senate Bylaws and Faculty Handbook.

Section 2 – Standing Committees of the Faculty

The Standing Committees of the Faculty are instruments of the Faculty whose actions are subject to approval or disapproval of the Faculty. The Faculty Senate shall recommend procedures for the election of members not designated by the official positions they hold. A full description of the Standing Committees of the Faculty can be found in the Faculty Senate Bylaws and Faculty Handbook.

Section 3 – Ad-hoc Committees

The President, Vice Presidents, or the Faculty Senate may create ad-hoc committees to accomplish specific and temporary tasks of college-wide importance. Ad-hoc committee membership and charge should be shared widely with all faculty through approved GHC communication channels. Should an ad-hoc committee continue working for a period longer than two academic years, it shall be referred to the Faculty Senate for an extension or inclusion as a Committee of the College or Committee of the Faculty.

Section 4 – Instructional Council

The Instructional Council is a collaborative body designed to embody shared governance principles, propel academic excellence at the College, and provide advice and counsel to the VPAA and Academic Deans on matters related to the academic operations of the College. It is chaired on a rotating basis by the VPAA and the Academic Deans. Its membership must include the Division Chairs, Campus Deans, Registrar, Director of eLearning, Faculty Senate President or their designee, and additional members added or removed by the VPAA. Such additions or removals must be shared widely through approved GHC communication channels.

Other persons may be asked to attend Council meetings when deemed appropriate by the Chair. Minutes of Council meetings shall be recorded by the Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and archived in accordance with USG Records Retention Schedule.

Section 5 - Special Academic Programs

Faculty may propose and develop special Academic Programs which span across divisions. Before implementation, the program must be approved by the VPAA and in consultation with other key stakeholders based on the program's goals. The program administrator is named by the VPAA and approved by the administrator's Dean. The administrator shall submit any proposed alterations for the program through the curriculum approval process.

ARTICLE VI. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Section 1 – Policies and Procedures Manual

The Georgia Highlands College Policies and Procedures Manual contains all policies and procedures under which the College operates. These are approved by affirmative vote of the President's Cabinet and acceptance by the President. All policies and procedures, or their amendments, must be sponsored by the Vice President responsible for that area.

The *Board of Regents Policy Manual* of the University System of Georgia should be consulted for human resources information concerning employment and resignation, tenure, removal of tenured faculty members, removal of non-tenured faculty, leaves of absence, outside employment, and all other personnel-related matters. Copies of the *Board of Regents Policy Manual* are maintained in administrative offices and are available on the University System of Georgia website.

GHC Faculty, Employee, and Student Handbooks offer detailed descriptions of the operations and procedures at the College. These handbooks are maintained on the College's intranet and in administrative offices.

Section 2 – Faculty Handbook

The purposes of the Faculty Handbook are to orient new faculty members to the policies and procedures of the College which are particularly related to the life and work of the faculty and to serve as a ready reference for all faculty members. It includes, but is not limited to, promotion and tenure, faculty evaluation, and expectations of all faculty members. Institutional-level content shall be amended after an affirmative vote of the Faculty Senate, an affirmative vote of the academic deans, and final acceptance by the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Any changes to the Faculty Handbook will be shared widely with all faculty through approved GHC communication channels. Procedures for amendments may be found in the Policy and Procedure Manual.

Section 3 – Employee Handbook

The purposes of the Employee Handbook are to orient new employees to the policies and procedures of the College and to serve as a ready reference for all employees. The Employee Handbook shall contain specific details concerning matters related to administrative and staff employment and processes. This includes, but is not limited to, employee policies, evaluation, and expectations. It shall be amended by an affirmative vote of the President's cabinet and acceptance by the President. Any changes to the Employee Handbook will be shared widely

with all employees through approved GHC communication channels. Procedures for amendments may be found in the Policy and Procedure Manual.

Section 4 – Student Handbook

The purposes of the Student Handbook are to orient new students to the policies and procedures of the College and to serve as a ready reference for all students. The Student Handbook shall contain specific details concerning matters related to student life and governance. This includes, but is not limited to, student policies and expectations. It shall be amended by an approval of the Vice President for Student Life and the Office of Student Affairs. Any changes to the Student Handbook will be shared widely with all students through approved GHC communication channels. Procedures for amendments may be found in the Policy and Procedure Manual.

ARTICLE VII: GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1 – Posting of Statutes

All College Faculty and Administrators are to be apprised that the Statutes are publicly posted in permanent document form on the College website and available for access in hard copy through the Office of the President. When amended, the superseded version should be retained as a matter of public record.

Section 2 – Interpretation of Statutes

All questions of interpretations of these Statutes and questions of the nature and extent of the jurisdiction of the Faculty and of the various administrative officers under these Statutes shall be determined by the President. The President shall settle all questions of conflict of jurisdiction that may arise between any of the Committees of the College, the Committees of the Faculty, or between them and the administrative officers. After the decision of the President on such questions, an appeal may be made to the Board of Regents pursuant to the Policy Manual of the Board of Regents.

Section 3 – Amendments to Statutes

All proposed amendments to the Statutes shall be made initially to the Faculty Senate, which shall review and refer those proposals to appropriate committees as necessary. The Senate shall consider such amendments and make recommendations to the Faculty. An amendment must be distributed to the Faculty in its final form no later than five days prior to the duly constituted faculty meeting, at which a quorum is present, on which a vote is taken. Any change to the proposal at that meeting requires a new five-day period of consideration before the vote is taken. If an amendment is approved by a two-thirds vote of the total Faculty having voting status, it shall be submitted to the President for approval and then to the Board of Regents for final approval. All voting processes should follow *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 11th ed. (RONR, 11th ed.).

Section 4 – Board of Regents' Powers

The Board of Regents retains the power to modify, amend, or repeal these Statutes in any respect. Subsequent actions by the Board of Regents requiring changes in these Statutes shall automatically be incorporated therein, and appropriate corrections shall be made and distributed by the Office of the President.

Section 5 – Ratification

The Statutes shall be ratified and become effective upon approval by 1) two-thirds vote of the Faculty having voting status; 2) approval by the President and; 3) the Board of Regents. The current statutes remain in place until final approval by the Board of Regents.

REVISION AND RATIFICATION DATES

November 9, 2006	Revised and approved by the Board of Regents
August 7, 2014	Amendments approved by the Faculty and the Board of Regents
February 2, 2015	Amendments approved by the Faculty and the Board of Regents
August 24, 2018	Amendments approved by the Faculty
October 1, 2019	Revised and approved by the Faculty and the Board of Regents