

SUNY Cobleskill Student Bill of Rights

SUNY Cobleskill students are a vibrant part of the campus community. In order to promote a successful student experience, the College supports students in the exercise of their civil rights and the free exchange of ideas. The SUNY Cobleskill Student Bill of Rights was created by students to foster such ideals via a model of shared governance.

Article I: Student Responsibility

- SUNY Cobleskill students shall accept full responsibility for their own actions under federal, state, and local laws. They shall recognize the rule of law and expect no immunity because of student status.
- SUNY Cobleskill students are responsible for reading and understanding the Student Handbook and other relevant College and departmental policies. Students are responsible for understanding the classroom policies and grading procedures of courses in which they are enrolled.
- The College is neither arbiter nor enforcer of student morals. Social morality on campus, not in violation of law or College policies, is of no disciplinary concern to the College.

Article II: Student Government Association Responsibility

- Our mission as the Student Government Association is to be the voice for our student body by assessing and enhancing the quality of student life, being visible servant leaders, promoting personal growth, and acting in the best interest of our peers.
- The overall purpose of SGA is to ensure a high-quality college experience for the student body, advocate for student needs, and oversee the distribution of and use of the student activity fee.
- SGA is a part of the campus shared governance process. Students have the right to participate in and express views on student related policies through a coordinated, representative student governance process.
- SGA will act in a supportive, welcoming, and inclusive manner.

Article III: College Responsibility

- The College is responsible for transparency in its tuition and budgeting policies and practices.
- Consistent with the regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the College protects the confidentiality of student records, including grades.
- College policies and regulations shall be published and readily available to students.
- The College will investigate claims of harassment, discrimination, and inequitable treatment in accordance with SUNY Cobleskill Non-Discrimination policy.

- SUNY Cobleskill will make every effort possible to ensure that library and technological resources on campus are the best possible, given campus resources, and sufficient to meet the needs of students from all program areas.

Article IV: Faculty & Staff Responsibilities

- To ensure an effective learning environment, faculty and staff have the responsibility of responding to student inquiries, concerns, or requests for assistance in a timely and professional manner.
- Instructors should seek and incorporate formal and informal suggestions and feedback from students as per the academic policies and union agreement to maintain high academic standards and successfully achieve desired student learning outcomes.
- Instructors have the responsibility of providing classroom policies and grading procedures to students via course syllabi in timely fashion each term.

SUNY Cobleskill's facilities and functions are provided to serve students and to ensure a safe, healthy, and effective learning environment.

- Students have the right to thorough and accurate academic advising and may request a change of advisor assignment at any point without fear of disrespect or retribution. It is a student's responsibility to follow through on advice from academic advisors to ensure timely course enrollment, internship enrollment, and graduation.
- Students have the right to consult with faculty outside of the classroom during regularly scheduled office hours or by appointment.
- Students have a right to timely and professional responses from faculty and staff to student inquiries, concerns, or requests for assistance to ensure an effective learning environment.
- Students have the right to provide their instructors with formal and informal suggestions and feedback as per the academic policies and union agreement. The following is a link for a course evaluation that any student can fill out and send to the respective party:
<https://www.cobleskill.edu/academics/assessment/course-evals.aspx#>
- Where possible and true to SUNY Cobleskill's mission, students have the right to applied, experiential learning opportunities regardless of their major or course of study.

Article V: Free Inquiry, Expression, and Organization

SUNY Cobleskill is an educational institution and, as such, affords the rights of free inquiry and expression to everyone.

- Freedom of expression and inquiry require responsibility on the parts of students and all campus constituencies to allow differences of opinion, to always work to protect the rights, safety, and property of others, and to contribute to the orderly functioning of the college.

- Students are free to take exception to views offered in courses and/or by College faculty, staff, and administrators without fear of disrespect or retribution.
- Students may lead and/or participate in demonstrations and/or open forums that do not disrupt classes and/or College activities, endanger the safety of individuals, or destroy property as per College Policy.
- Student organizations are free to bring to the College and/or sponsor guest speakers to address the campus community regarding any issue or discipline. Sponsorship of a speaker does not imply endorsement by the sponsoring group or the College. Students will follow the College's free speech policies.
- Any existing or future college student media outlets—radio, newspaper, video, web-based, etc.—shall remain free of censorship and prior view of copy. Editors and managers of student media are protected from arbitrary suspension and/or other punitive measures because of student, faculty, or administrative disapproval of editorial policy or content. However, responsible journalism standards are expected to be followed by College student media outlets.
- SUNY Cobleskill guarantees students the freedom to organize and join student clubs and organizations as long as these organizations are chartered according to procedures established by the College and the SGA.
- Practices deemed in breach of College/SGA policy for student organization formation and operation may result in being referred to the Conduct process.
- Affiliation with a non-college organization will not in and of itself disqualify a student member or an organization from institutional recognition and formation as a campus organization.

Article VI: Freedom from Harassment and Access to Information

Students have the right to be free from harassment and inequitable treatment for reasons of their race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital status, and arrest and/or conviction record or any other protected classes. Further, in accordance with the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Acts, disabled and Vietnam Era veterans are ensured of non-discriminatory treatment.

SUNY Cobleskill students have the right to access College policies and regulations, which shall be published and readily available. Students have the obligation to familiarize themselves with these policies/regulations.

- Students have the right to information regarding the allocation of their tuition and student fee dollars to campus personnel, operating, and capital expenditures.

Article VII: Living Environment

SUNY Cobleskill's facilities and offices are provided to serve students and to ensure a safe, healthy and effective living environment.

- All students have the right to use campus facilities and services to further educational and community pursuits according to College policies and procedures
 - Access will be provided to career, professional, and internship development services and opportunities.
 - Access will be provided to traditional academic tutoring services.
- CAS will strive to provide students with a wide variety of high quality, nutritious food options through its on-campus dining establishments.
 - Nutritious food includes that which would be deemed by health professionals as supporting a healthy lifestyle, healthy weight, and cognitive functions. Care will also be taken to provide, in a non-stigmatized fashion, options to students with special food needs including vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, allergen-free and other diets.

Article VIII: Access to Due Process

SUNY Cobleskill students have the right to due process as a component of ensuring safe, healthy, and effective learning and living environments.

- Students have the right to due process as outlined in the Student Handbook
- Students believing to have received unfair or discriminatory academic treatment by professors or instructors have the right to address such issues with the professor or instructor of concern without fear of disrespect or retribution.
 - For concerns regarding grading, refer to the guidelines in the academic policies
 - For concerns regarding unfair or discriminatory treatment, the student should address such issues with the professor or instructor of concern.
 - Students have the right to go to the Dean, Chair, and/or Provost to give informal feedback regarding a faculty member.
 - When resolution is not possible through such informal interaction with the faculty member, students have the right to formally lodge grievances in writing with the relevant department chair or school dean. During this time, a student who provides a written appeal may continue to attend class; pending there is no threat to safety.
- Discrimination complaints/concerns regarding faculty or staff must be reported to the Director of Human Resources and Affirmative Action (or designee).

Article IX: Honoring the Student Bill of Rights

SUNY Cobleskill faculty, staff and students are expected to honor the Student Bill of Rights.

- Students not abiding by these principles will be addressed by following the policies and guidelines of the Student Handbook.
- Faculty and staff not abiding by these principles will be addressed by following the guidelines of the appropriate employee handbook, performance management system, union contract, and/or disciplinary process.

Article X: Operating Principles

- All actions of the college and the students are governed by Federal, State, and local law and College policy, which supersedes any and all items contained in the Student Bill of Rights.
- Revisions that affect the Student Bill of Rights will be discussed through a shared governance model between the SGA, faculty, and staff.
- The Student Government Association is responsible for the Student Bill of Rights through a collaborative process.

Supporting Documents

- Page 44-46 of the Faculty Handbook (2019)
 - Responsibilities of Academic Employees