

3.9.1

Student Affairs and Services: Student rights

The institution publishes a clear and appropriate statement of student rights and responsibilities and disseminates the statement to the campus community.

Judgment

Compliance Partial Compliance Non-Compliance Not Applicable

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University (TTU) publishes student rights and responsibilities information in print and online in a variety of ways. The TTU online Student Handbook [1] includes a comprehensive explanation of these rights and responsibilities, as well as policies on student privacy rights, the student disciplinary system, and the right to due process. The online Handbook is available at all times. New students are urged to read the Student Handbook in its entirety. During the TTU Student Orientation Advisement and Registration (SOAR) sessions, student rights and responsibilities are discussed with new students and their parents/guests. Also, SOAR publications such as the Student Success Planner and the SOAR Guide (24 pages [2]) discuss various student rights and responsibilities. Basic student rights and responsibilities printed in the Student Handbook are outlined in the narrative below.

Student Rights [3]

1. Students have a right to the best education which can be afforded them in keeping with the financial resources of the institution.
2. Students have the inherent right to optimum development, to reach their full potential as useful, thoughtful, and self-reliant persons.
3. Students have the right to free inquiry, free thought, free choice, and free expression insofar as these do not encroach upon the rights of others.
4. Students have the right to enroll in the University; hence no student is required to stay at TTU, and the option to withdraw is available at all times.
5. Students have the right of representation in student affairs through their official student organizations and in the University affairs through their official student representatives.
6. Students are entitled to freedom from unreasonable search and/or seizure regarding their person, their residence, and their personal property; and they are entitled to due process as provided by the judiciary procedures of the University.
7. Students have the right to affiliate with officially registered campus organizations of their choice, within the requirements of those organizations relative to membership, and they have the right to seek through official procedures to establish organizations of their choosing so long as such are not in conflict with the educational purposes of the University.
8. Students have the right, when interrogated and/or arrested by University Police officials, to remain silent, to be free from coercion, and to be advised of these rights.
9. Students have the right to enjoy the opportunities afforded by the University without discrimination because of race, creed, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

Student Responsibilities [4]

1. Students are responsible for the proper completion of their academic program, for familiarity with all requirements of the University Catalog under which they intend to be graduated, for

maintaining the grade average required, and for meeting all other degree requirements. Students are also responsible for determining how much non-academic work, if any, they should carry with a given class load in order to avoid excessive total work loads which would be detrimental to their academic program. Their advisor will counsel with them, but the final responsibility remains that of the students.

2. Students are required to have knowledge of and observe all regulations pertaining to campus life and student department and to be familiar with the information contained in University publications.
3. Students are responsible for maintaining communication with the University by keeping officials informed at all times of their current address, including ZIP code and telephone number.
4. The Legal Responsibility Act of 1971, found in Chapter 162 of the Public Acts of 1971, was passed by the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee. It states: "Notwithstanding any laws to the contrary, any person who is eighteen (18) years of age or older shall have the same rights, duties and responsibilities as a person who is twenty-one (21) years of age or older." According to an interpretation by the University's legal counsel, students 18 years of age or older can be prosecuted for the violations of laws regarding alcoholic beverages, drugs, bad checks, breach of contract, cohabitation, statutory rape, manslaughter, etc. Tennessee Law states that it shall be unlawful for any person under the age of 21 years to have in his or her possession alcoholic beverages for any purpose. Neither parents nor University officials are expected or required to intervene in cases such as these. The student will be held accountable and face the charges just as any other adult violator. Therefore, the University reserves the right, through its authorized officials, to work with civil authorities in reviewing such cases, and to exercise disciplinary sanctions, including interim suspension, against the student charged with a misdemeanor or felony if at least one of the following circumstances is present: a. If the accused admits guilt to the alleged violation in the presence of University officials. b. If the accused is deemed to be a threat to persons or property of the University. Such determination is to be reached by a formal hearing before the University's appropriate disciplinary body. The University must provide all essentials as to date, place, and time for this hearing in such a way that it is possible for the student to be present. c. If the accused refuses to appear at the aforementioned hearing, the individual forfeits his or her right to same. Even though the student is found "not guilty" of the charges by the civil courts in cases of suspension or expulsion, he or she must appear before the appropriate disciplinary body of the University to obtain clearance for readmission in good standing under current University regulations.

Student Right to Privacy

On May 20, 1975, TTU approved a statement of policy that included provisions for the release of information about students and the rights of students and others to have access to TTU's education records. The complete statement of "Privacy Rights of Students" is available in the Student Handbook [5] and in TTU Policy 265 Confidentiality of Student Records and FERPA Compliance [6].










Disciplinary System and Due Process Rights

TTU has developed a code of student conduct and expects students to conform to these codes. The student disciplinary policies include both academic and social misconduct. The policies also include the type of conduct prohibited and the procedures to be used for the adjudication process. The students' rights and responsibilities policies are also included in the student disciplinary policies [7]. The right of students to due process can be found online in the Student Handbook [8]. Information on student disciplinary policies and on due process rights is also available in TTU Policy 302 Student Disciplinary Policies [9].

Conclusion

Through a combination of online and print sources, as well as during students' initial orientation visit to the University, information regarding student rights and responsibilities are clearly conveyed to TTU students. Therefore, TTU is in compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.9.1.

Sources

-  [1] Student Handbook
-  [2] Orientation Book 2014
-  [3] Student Rights
-  [4] Responsibilities
-  [5] Privacy Rights of Students
-  [6] Policy 265 Confidentiality of Student Records and FERPA Compliance
-  [7] Student Disciplinary Policies
-  [8] Student Due Process
-  [9] Policy 302 Student Disciplinary Policies