



# **Round Rock Higher Education Center Texas State University – San Marcos**

## **Staff Handbook**

October 2010

# RRHEC

Avery Building

Nursing Building

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**Avery Building Dedication Ceremony  
May 19, 2006**

## **I. Welcome**

Welcome to the Round Rock Higher Education Center (RRHEC). We are very glad to have you as part of our team. We look forward to a great year and we want you to know that we appreciate you.

This department is continuously refining and developing policies, procedures and a culture of excellence. We want you to represent the RRHEC to the best of your abilities. At the same time, we will strive to provide you with an experience that enriches your professional and personal skills and goals.

The RRHEC is comprised of the following organizations: Texas State University, Austin Community College (ACC) and Temple College at Taylor (TCAT). There is no Temple College presence at the RRHEC but ACC does maintain an office at the Center.

The Center houses several departments and two grant programs. The RRHEC department is under the Academic Affairs Department and the Director reports directly to Dr. Perry Moore, Provost.

## **II. Mission Statement**

The RRHEC staff provides quality educational delivery systems, student support services, and training opportunities to students in North Austin and Williamson County. To accomplish these goals, the RRHEC expands on the quality instruction of the faculty by providing:

- instructional facilities equipped with the latest technology,
- efficient and effective student support services
- career training responsive to community needs, and
- courteous, top-quality customer service.

## **III. General Responsibilities and Expectations**

### **A. What you can expect from working at the RRHEC**

1. Interactions in a collegial and professional environment.
2. Reward and recognition for efforts and outcomes.
3. Opportunity to pursue personal career goals and develop to your full potential.
4. Experiences in a fast-paced and growing organization.
5. Willingness to use everyone's ideas and expertise for teamwork and collaboration.
6. Opportunity to hone professional skills and competencies.
7. Contact with a variety of internal and external constituencies.

### **B. What working at the RRHEC requires from you**

1. Serve all constituents with honesty, integrity, diligence, and respect.
2. Contribute to the goals of the RRHEC, Academic Affairs, and the University.
3. Initiate time and cost saving measures when possible.
4. Produce accurate and quality work by specified dates.
5. Keep a timely and consistent work schedule.
6. Maintain a professional atmosphere.
7. Focus on excellence.

## **IV. Accountability, Commitment and Attendance**

By accepting employment with the RRHEC, you enter into an implied contract that you can and will exhibit commitment and assume accountability for your performance. Commitment is demonstrated by being punctual in your attendance and in the performance of your tasks, by limiting absences, scheduling personal appointments at off-peak hours, and demonstrating eagerness to perform your tasks and assume new tasks as necessary.

Accountability is demonstrated by taking responsibility for the quality of your work and remedying any inaccuracies or problems as quickly as possible. The quality of your work and an eagerness to perform your tasks and assume new responsibilities are a reflection of you and the RRHEC. If you need to take time off from work you need to request it from your **immediate supervisor** in advance so your tasks can be covered by someone else.

## **V. Office Etiquette**

This section addresses etiquette while at work.

**A. Phone Etiquette: Phones must not go unanswered.** The first priority of all staff is to answer any phone that is ringing. Customers who are in the office in person can hear the phone ringing and understand that you must answer it. But the customers on the phone do not know that you are busy and will interpret an unanswered phone as a lack of interest from the staff and the Center. If customers are in the office, please excuse yourself for a moment, pick up the phone, and if the caller's concern can be answered with a quick response, do so. If the caller requires a lengthy response, ask the caller to please hold. If your office is in another floor of the building and you happen to be in the front office while phones are ringing and the regular front office staff is on the phone, **you too need to answer the phones.**

All staff must check their phones throughout the day to insure that messages have been retrieved. Time needs to be set aside to respond in a timely fashion to the person who has left the message. Usually this means returning the phone call in the same day it was received. If you do not have

the information requested by the caller, return the call indicating who might be of help to the caller.

- B. Cell Phones:** It is imperative that you **limit your cell phone** use while at work. If a private call is received, please be sure to answer it promptly and either handle the call privately or ask the caller to call at another time. Your work is your signature. It is a reflection on you, the office and the University and private calls should never interfere with customer service.
- C. Diversity:** Refrain from speaking or behaving in ways that are discriminatory on the basis of race, national origin, sexual preference, religion, age or disabilities at all times. Show respect for others' preferences.
- D. Pleasantries:** Anyone walking into our center, students or professors should be greeted with a smile. "Hello...or Good Morning, or afternoon...May I help you? Address all Professors as Dr... (*better to err with formality than offend them with a lesser title*).
- E. Politeness:** Say "yes sir", "no sir" or "yes Ma'am..." when speaking with anyone, (please refrain from "uh huh, uh ugh, or yea, etc.)" Use "please" and "thank you" at every opportunity. Be respectful, not just to people coming into the office, but to your co-workers. Communicate your feelings, as it helps eliminate tensions and misunderstandings.
- F. Inappropriate Language:** Curse words, derogatory slurs, or any other inappropriate language will not be tolerated at work.
- G. Messages:** Leave proper messages: Use the pink phone message slips. Begin with whom the message is for, who came by or called, the time, date and what they wanted or said. Be sure to include your name or initials on the message. Deliver the message to the appropriate person, their administrative assistant, or to their In-Box.
- H. Accuracy:** If you are sending someone to another department or office be sure you are sending them to the right place. Double-check the location. Call and makes sure the department/office is the right place to send them, and ask for the name of the person the student can ask for. Don't send them on a "wild goose chase."
- I. Neatness:** Ensure a clean and neat office environment. If there is nothing to do, there is always something that can be cleaned, storage cabinets that can be straightened up, or files that can be reviewed and cleaned out. Or go around the desk and look at our office from the "customer's" perspective. How can we improve? Then do it!

## VI. Customer Service and Communication

All student assistants and staff are expected to give customers friendly, courteous, and prompt service. This is the backbone of our operations and success. Being tired or in a bad mood are not reasons to treat a customer badly.

**A. First Impressions:** A calm relaxed smile says that you enjoy your work and enjoy meeting people. That kind of smile puts everyone at ease, and makes for a great first impression when anyone enters our office. Building rapport begins with the first impression. \*(1)

**B. Basic Strategy:** Great customer service is knowing and doing the “little things” right. There are some very basic things that make a big difference to customers. Some of the basics include: \*(2)

1. Smile as the customer walks in the door.
2. Shake hands – don’t be afraid to extend your hand.
3. Welcome our customers – “Hi, how are you?” “May I help you?”
4. Use your name, “My name is ... May I help you?”
5. Use the customer’s name... “May I say who is calling, who is here...?”
6. Acknowledge your customers – especially if you are busy; look up, hold up your hand, mouth one minute “please”, smile and let them know you know they need your attention.
7. Articulate your voice and smile! Use communication skills, a good time to fine tune them, or learn some... (It’s not what you say, but how you say it!!!!)
8. You can never say “Thank You!” too many times.
9. Respect our environment (a clean office and classrooms - are a must!!! Make a mess? Clean it up!)
10. Never lie or mislead the customer (it just makes them mad later).
11. Do not be afraid to say, “I’m new here,” or “I don’t know” or ask someone (better to say I don’t know than tell them something wrong!)
12. Do not be afraid to say, “I’m sorry.”
13. Show empathy (with their predicament). You may be in their shoes one day, if you have not already! Treat people how you want to be treated!
14. Listen to your customer (use the 75/25 rule). (Let them do 75% of the talking, you do 25%.)
15. If you do not know the answer to their question, tell them that, and assure them you will do your best to find the answer...and do it!

**C. Stress and Conflict:** We want a professional presence, which means having credibility with all types of customers. It’s hard for customers to trust and depend on us if we have uncontrollable outbursts. If others see us react irrationally or emotionally we damage our relationships and influence with them. Customers will take the cue from you. If you are in control and able to handle problems, the customer will also remain calm.

1. **Know triggers:** Identify what makes you mad. Awareness can lead to a responsible reaction rather than turning into a raving maniac. Think wise and try not to let them push your hot buttons. Control your responses. If someone makes you mad by being rude, it is never a bad idea to just say NOTHING. (The old count to ten...)
2. **Diffuse:** Be empathetic to those students coming in (especially at registration) who are emotional, stressed and harried. You can use phrases to help diffuse a difficult person/situation: "I understand..." "I'm so sorry that happened to you..." "I can see why you feel that way..." "Wow, that's awful...let's see what we can do to help"...above all, let them talk and get it out (use the 75/25 rule; let them do 75 percent of the talking!)
3. **Stone method:** Instead of getting defensive and angry, don't react at all. Keep all signs of anger under wraps. Remain in control.
4. **Patience:** In a flash of anger, sometimes we react too quickly. Let the person finish their sentence or thought. In waiting to respond verbally, you create a strong image. Again, you appear in control. Count to ten, sit or stand still. When you begin to speak, speak slowly, quietly and carefully weigh your words.
5. **New Perspective:** Put the situation in perspective. Will what this person says at this moment change your life? Poke a little fun at yourself and the circumstances. It will help you feel better and help everyone around you feel at ease. \*(1) Do not take their comments personally.

## VII. Confidentiality and Privacy

Information heard or seen in the office is to be kept confidential. We ask that you use caution when duplicating confidential information on copy and fax machines.

**If you are caught distributing confidential information outside of the office, it is grounds for termination and possible legal action by the student whose information is being circulated. Violation or abuse of UPPS 07.10.02.02, by knowingly and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying or possessing, in whole or in part, the contents of an unadministered test or bribing anyone to obtain an unadministered test or obtain information about a test is a violation of the academic honesty policy and is grounds for termination and expulsion from the University.** We can't emphasize enough the importance of abiding by this policy. If you are unsure of whether information is confidential, please check with your supervisor.

Privacy, including yours, your co-workers, students and faculty, is another important workplace consideration. Office gossip and idle chatter are two of the worst offenders which contribute to unproductive office time. Vicious gossip is detrimental to maintaining a professional presence and can deteriorate the whole department's atmosphere and morale. If you find yourself the recipient

of too much gossip, the best way to diffuse the situation is to remain noncommittal and a bit unattached. Educate and empower yourself. Get your own information from other sources before forming an opinion. \*(1) topics to avoid in the office include: 1) trouble in your relationship 2) money problems 3) salary levels 4) your (or others) sexual life 5) your (or others) party life 6) secrets known about boss, coworkers or other constituents.

## **VIII. Projects and Tasks**

Staff and student assistants are expected to complete projects assigned to them to the best of their abilities and within the constraints of time lines provided to you. We expect you to always strive for excellence in the quality of your work. If assigned a project you must let your supervisor or the staff member who assigned the project to you know the status of the project before you leave for the day. Please do not pass the project on to another person without notifying a fulltime staff member and do not leave the project uncompleted. Remember, we are depending on you to finish your work!

## **IX. Time Keeping**

### **Work hours**

Although your work hours during a work week may vary due to special events, you must work the hours assigned to you by your supervisor and/or the Director in order to insure coverage of all tasks throughout the work week.

Your start time must not be adjusted unless you have prior approval from your supervisor. This is especially important in the areas that service students and the general public directly.

If you work a flexible schedule, (i.e. leave early on some Fridays and not on others), you must adjust your lunch schedule and not your start or end times (unless you have documented approval from your supervisor).

### **Absences/Tardiness**

If you are ill and cannot make it to work or you are going to be late, you must notify your immediate supervisor immediately so arrangements can be made to cover your responsibilities.

You must track your absences, tardies or work hours in SAP/FAS. If you are more than 15 minutes late, you must record this on the SAP system as either vacation or comp time unless your supervisor gives you permission to make up the time on that same day. You will need to round up to the nearest quarter hour.

If you are consistently late or leave early, your supervisor will speak with you about it and this issue may be noted on your evaluation. **Habitual lateness, tardiness, or absences are grounds for termination.**

### **Lunch Breaks/ Rest Periods (Breaks)**

Lunch breaks are **not** considered paid time. For example if your schedule is 8:00am to 5:00pm with an hour for lunch, you will get paid for 8 hours as the lunch period is not considered paid time.

Lunch breaks are typically an hour in duration. Part-time employees are allowed to take a 30-minute lunch break. Check with your supervisor before going to lunch and remember to check back in with the supervisor when you resume your shift. If your schedule is such that you work the 4 hours straight, you will not have a lunch break.

Full-time employees are allowed two (2) fifteen minute breaks, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Part-time employees are allowed to take one 15 minute rest period during the work day. These breaks are considered paid time.

Department supervisors will authorize breaks for their individual departments based on the availability of staff and other pertinent factors.

Departments should stagger the breaks and in no case should they be allowed to be taken if this means an area will be unattended or the department is short staffed.

### **Time Information Entry**

**Staff and student assistants are responsible for submitting time information by the specified deadlines.** RRHEC staff employees must **save and release time** information every Monday for the preceding work week.

Texas State University hourly and student employees, it is advisable that you save and release your time information daily and no later than on a weekly basis preferably every Monday. If deadlines are missed, a pay check cannot be issued during that pay period. It will be included in the next pay period.

## **X. Leave and Overtime**

All fulltime and halftime regular classified (non-exempt) and unclassified (exempt) staff members are eligible for sick leave, vacation and holidays. Half time employees do not accrue comp time.

Texas State University employees can access leave information by logging into the SAP portal: <https://ibis.sap.txstate.edu:50001/irj/portal> and select the Employee Self-Service tab and then select the Time Accounts link.

Because we have a very lean staff, your attendance at work is vital to the smooth operation of the Center. Therefore, you are reminded when possible to schedule doctor's appointments at times when other workers are available to assume your duties.

**Overtime must be pre-approved by your supervisor. You may not work extra hours without your supervisor's written approval.**

Unclassified employees earn comp time at an hour for hour rate (Texas State University employees). Classified employees earned overtime at a rate of one and a half hours.

Vacation must be requested and approved by your supervisor in advance. While you may have earned comp time, you must get approval from your supervisor to use this comp time at a time and date that is convenient for the office schedule. Leave without pay of more than 30 days requires an additional process and special paperwork and approval from Human Resources at the University.

### **Working From Home**

**Working from home requires authorization by the University President.**

Please note that if you call in sick or take a vacation day(s) and work from home on that day(s), you cannot adjust the hours you record for sick or vacation leave to reflect the time you worked from home unless you have authorization to do so from the University President.

For example, suppose I call in sick and am out of the office for an entire work day (8 hours) and during the course of the day, I login to check e-mail, respond to some of it, or do other work. I will still need to record 8 hours of sick leave. I cannot offset my leave by the hours I worked from home.

## **XI. Mail Boxes, In-Boxes, and E-mail Messages**

Mail boxes, in-boxes, and University e-mail addresses are provided as a communication vehicle for all office staff. Please check your box and your e-mail each day when you arrive at work in order to get your work assignment for the day and to remain informed about any changes that have occurred or issues that may arise at work. Follow up on items left in your box and e-mail. If you have any questions about information, please check with your supervisor.

**Check with the office supervisor at the beginning of your shift for priority**

jobs since tasks may have been re-prioritized since you were last in the office.

## **XII. Use of Phones, Computers, E-mail, Copiers, and Printers**

**A. Phones:** Office phones are for business calls. Personal calls during work hours should be kept to a minimum. It is against the law to use State phones to place personal long distance calls. **Any personal long distance calls during the work day must be made on your personal cell phone or with a personal calling card.**

You will be issued a long distance code that will be your responsibility to safeguard. Every month, you will be required to sign the bill attesting that the calls made were business related.

**B. Computers & E-mail:** Computers are for office-related purposes. Do not store or save any personal files on the computer. Reading, checking, and sending personal e-mail should be done during breaks or lunch hours and must be kept to a minimum during the work day.

**C. Copiers & Printers:** Copiers and printers are for office-related purposes and **should not** be used to duplicate or print personal documents.

## **XIII. Office Dress Code**

Comfortable clothing appropriate for an office environment is required.

**Staff Dress Code:** All staff is expected to dress in a neat and professional manner. This consists of:

- Dresses, skirts, suits, or slacks for women
- Collared shirt (polo or button-up) and slacks for men
- Custodians & maintenance workers will wear a uniform and will have a badge identifying who they are
- Staff may wear jeans or walking shorts **ONLY** on days when extensive physical labor or unusual work conditions/circumstances are anticipated

The following are **NOT** appropriate for work:

- **NO** sheer or see-through blouses or dresses
- **NO** midriffs, tank tops or undershirts
- **NO** torn or dirty clothing
- **NO** shorts, blue jeans, or sweat pants
- **NO** extremely short skirts or dresses

**Student Assistant Dress Code:** Student assistants are expected to dress comfortably and neatly. All of the guidelines above apply to student assistants as well, with the following exceptions. Students **ARE** allowed to wear:

- Neat and non-offensive t-shirts
- Neat blue jeans

#### **XIV. Smoking Policies**

The RRHEC follows the smoking policies established by Texas State University-San Marcos and the State of Texas and the City of Round Rock. There is no smoking allowed in any building, lounge, or classroom. Smoking is **not** allowed anywhere on the campus including the parking lot. This policy will be enforced.

#### **XV. Professional Development & Training Sessions**

**Student assistants** will be informed when they are required to attend specific training with their supervisors. Student assistants are paid for the hours spent in training.

**Staff:** Prior approval from your supervisor is required before you sign up for any Professional Development classes or outside training sessions.

If you will be traveling to the main campus in San Marcos to attend the training, you should use the state vehicle whenever possible. If you can't use the state vehicle and will be using your vehicle, you must prepare a travel application as it is a tool for liability issues and budget control.

#### **XVI. Performance Reviews**

Please refer to your institutions' performance review policies and procedures. For Texas State University employee's information on performance reviews may be found at <http://www.txstate.edu/effective/upps/upps-04-04-20.html>.

#### **XVII. Professionalism**

It is extremely important that we maintain a professional manner at all times. The RRHEC is highly visible in the Round Rock community and among Texas State stakeholders. It is, therefore, extremely important to be aware of the image we project. Please be aware of the things that you are saying and doing and their appropriateness to the continuing excellence and professional atmosphere of the Center. Your attitude and performance are key to the success of the entire RRHEC.

## **XVIII. References**

**\*(1)** Taken from PROFESSIONAL PRESENCE, By Susan Bixler, Perigee Publications, Pages 40, 190, 108, 191-194.

**\*(2)** “Customers Count!” Seminar conducted by Morris Ellington of the South Texas Group Recruiting & Training Department – Enterprise Rent-A-Car Company of Texas.”

\*Thanks to Texas State-San Marcos Career Services for their input and help by letting us use and adopt portions of their Office Policies and Procedures for Career Associates.

\* Thanks to Dr. Debbie McAllister, Chair Department of Marketing, Texas State-San Marcos, for sharing and allowing the use of their Marketing Department’s “Basic Office Policies, Procedures and Etiquette,” dated November 2002.

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**XIX. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT**

This is to acknowledge that I have reviewed this document. My signature below indicates that I fully understand and agree to abide by the expectations and standards stated in this document and will adhere to all policies and procedures of the Round Rock Higher Education Center.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Hire Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Today's Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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## **Ordering Supplies and Purchasing Related Policies & Procedures:**

***Policy:*** Purchasing procedures will adhere to Texas State University policies and procedures. The Director has the ultimate approval authority and is responsible for the budget.

### ***Procedures:***

- Each internal RRHEC department under Dr. Rehbein's authority (OSC, CTC, Administrative Suite) has an administrative assistant or other staff member assigned to enter requisitions via the Bobcatalog system. This is mostly for office supplies and some technology related purchases.
- For purchases outside of supplies and those which CTC staff may enter, please contact the administrative assistant (Julie Palacios – jp73) located in the director's suite.
- No personal purchases may be made using university funds.
- No purchases may be made without prior approval from the Director and without following the purchasing policies. Purchases made for the Center without going through the proper process will not be reimbursed.
- If you have any questions regarding purchasing, please contact Lupita Mireles at [mm73@txstate.edu](mailto:mm73@txstate.edu) or via phone at ext. 64423.

## **Receiving Policies & Procedures:**

***Policy:*** Receiving procedures will comply with Texas State University policies for items that require centralized receiving. Items directly received at the RRHEC will be handled according to the following procedures.

### ***Procedures:***

- All office supplies ordered from Staples will be delivered to the internal department who requested the purchase. If the Staples representative does not deliver to your department, please contact the administrative assistant (Julie Palacios, jp73) and let her know so that we can inform the main campus. Delivery to specific departments is part of the contract.
- For orders processed by the University's Materials Management department, the courier will pick up the order and will deliver to the appropriate department. Either the department accepting the order or the courier will submit documentation to the administrative assistant (Julie Palacios) located in the Director's Suite.
- For all other orders, the department receiving the order will process a goods receipt. For assistance in processing a goods receipt please contact Lupita Mireles (mm73) or Julie Palacios (jp73).
-

## **Reporting Building and Grounds Maintenance Issues:**

***Policy:** Maintenance related issues will be handled by Trane and will comply with the contract approved by the Board of Regents. Services provided by Trane include the operation, maintenance monitoring and repair of all mechanical, electrical, janitorial, and grounds building systems.*

### ***Procedures:***

- For non-emergency maintenance issues related to the Avery building, please call Trane at ext. 64224 or log into:  
[http://www.lab.rrhec.txstate.edu/maintenance/wo\\_rq.html](http://www.lab.rrhec.txstate.edu/maintenance/wo_rq.html).
- For emergency maintenance needs please contact J.R. Howard (cell phone) 512.848.0285.

A listing of Trane staff located at the RRHEC Avery building along with their duties and work schedule may be found here:

<http://www.lab.rrhec.txstate.edu/maintenance/index.html>.