

# Civility in our Campus Community

So far, we have addressed general practices and principles of civility and civil discourse. There are also layers of expectations for community behavior specific to the Stony Brook campus.

Stony Brook University's [Community Pledge](#) is a voluntary pledge to create a campus community that promotes diversity and supports every member of the community. The Stony Brook community has come together to affirm that no one should suffer abuse because they are different in any way. The spirit of the pledge is to create a community of respect for everyone on our diverse campus, no matter their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, level of ability, or any other difference.

As a member of the Stony Brook University community, I agree to promote equality, civility, caring, responsibility, accountability, and respect. I recognize the importance of understanding and appreciating our differences and similarities.

*Therefore, I pledge the following:*

- I will not encroach on the rights of others, either as individuals or as groups.
- I accept the obligation to listen to and understand the beliefs and opinions of others, and to treat others fairly.
- I am accountable for my own behavior. I accept that I am, in part, responsible for the welfare of the community itself.
- I will stand up for the dignity of every member of this community.
- I will celebrate and express pride in our community's diversity in all its forms: race, gender identity, differing abilities, religion, sexual orientation or any of the dimensions which makes each person uniquely human.

[Click to sign the pledge.](#)

## The Conduct Code

Every student who attends Stony Brook University has digitally signed the Conduct Code via SOLAR. The University Student Conduct Code governs the behaviors of any student who has chosen to be a part of the Stony Brook University community. The Code provides an overview of the rules and regulations that are in place. It is designed to protect the rights of the community while respecting the rights of each individual. You should be able to carry on your daily business safely, peacefully, and productively while you are here; these rules and regulations have been designed to accomplish that goal. For all students, the Student Conduct Code supports compliance with the state and federal laws related to drugs, alcohol, weapons, discrimination, sexual assault or abuse, and racial, sexual, or sexual-preference harassment. The University Student Conduct Code is available on the Office of University Community Standards website and can be accessed: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/newstudents/policies.shtml>

(Adapted from the Stony Brook University Student Conduct Code)

### **Do you know? Some facts to know about the Code of Conduct:**

- Even if you are 21 and legally allowed to have alcohol in your room there is a limit how much you can have. No individual student who is 21 or older may possess in their room more than six (6) 12 oz. bottles/cans of beer OR 1/2 gallon of wine OR 0.5 or 1/2 liter of spirits at one time.
- The University defines hazing as endangering the mental or physical health of another for the purpose of affiliation with any organization.
- The code may be applied to off-campus violations when students are participating in University-sanctioned activities, such as sporting events, field trips, conferences, or are exercising privileges granted to Stony Brook students.

- The code explains who hears cases of academic dishonesty.

## In the Classroom

Both academic freedom and freedom of speech are foundational principles of academic institutions. Students and professors have the freedom to teach and learn whatever they think is a worthy topic. That freedom is key to academic discovery of all types. If Galileo had not pursued his hypothesis that the earth revolves around the sun against immense societal and religious pressure to believe otherwise, we might still believe that Earth was the center of the universe. Lively debate is not only welcome across campus, but in the context of a small seminar class, students are expected to form their own opinions and share them with the class.

But while no one can take away the freedom to pursue any subject of inquiry, the means and methods have rules of engagement to make sure everyone is treated with respect. In addition to the basic rules outlined in the Conduct Code, each class may have rules of engagement outlined in the syllabus. Instructors and students may also create a set of “ground rules” for class discussion.

### *What are ground rules?*

Ground Rules are a list of rules of engagement that a class or group agrees upon, especially when discussing particularly sensitive topics. The idea of Ground Rules is to create an environment where everyone feels comfortable expressing their opinions, their thoughts and feelings.

### *Create Ground Rules for your UGC 101 class.*

What would make you feel comfortable sharing your thoughts and opinions in class? In creating ground rules, you might consider the following:

1. How will people participate in class discussion? Raised hands? Holding and then passing a hacky sack around? Coming to the front of the room? Can the class members simply shout out the answer?
2. What behaviors do you want to encourage?
3. What behaviors do you want the class to avoid? Shouting? Cell phone use during class? Interrupting?

## In the Residence Halls

Living in a residence hall at Stony Brook University can be an exciting and valuable experience. Living on campus can be an integral part of students’ education by fostering the development of the individual and enriching their academic experience. Guiding the efforts to enhance the development of the individual resident are the principles of preparing the individual to make a positive contribution to the campus and in society. The Residence Hall staff challenges residents to examine their value systems, and by teaching and modeling such characteristics of citizenship as interdependence, acceptance of differences, and pride in and responsibility for one’s community (Adapted from the Campus Residences Mission Statement).

### *Residence Hall Communities*

The communities that develop in residence halls and even on individual floors start from the very beginning. Resident Assistants hold floor meetings during the first week of school to discuss their community expectations and for residents to get to know each other. Throughout the year, the Resident Assistants continue to ensure that these expectations are being met, to serve as a resource for residents, and to provide educational and social programs for their community. Campus Residence staff encourage residents to be active in their communities through participating in Hall Council, attending events, holding their peers accountable for their actions, and working with each other to create a welcoming and enjoyable community.

### *Residential Community Standards*

Living in Undergraduate Residence Halls offers resident students a unique opportunity to interact with people from different parts of the country and world. As a resident, you will be living with or near people who are of varying ages and who have varying cultural norms. It is important to the Division of Campus Residences that residents of Campus Housing celebrate these cultural differences, while abiding to the following rules and regulations which have been implemented for the health and safety of all parties. Though your cultural norms may be different from those of your room/apartment/suite mates and/or neighbors, there are still certain rules and regulations by which you must abide in order to live within Campus Housing (*This is from the beginning of the terms of occupancy*).

One of the campus documents that govern the behavior in the residence halls is the [Terms of Occupancy](#) for Undergraduate Residence Halls and West Apartments. This document outlines residence hall policies, occupancy guidelines, financial obligations, standards of living, safety, and security, information about emergency maintenance/custodial situations, and minimum standards for conditions of residential facilities. You agreed to the Terms of Occupancy when going through your room selection, as well as when you signed for the key to your room. You are responsible for knowing and understanding what is in the document. The document can be found on the Campus Residences website and is available: <http://www.studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/res/rules.shtml>

#### **Did you know that according to the Terms of Occupancy:**

- You cannot have a stand-alone microwave.
- You must gain consent in writing from all of your roommates/suitemates and have your RHD sign a guest form before you can have someone stay overnight.
- Each person in a residence hall will be held responsible for any damage beyond normal wear and tear to their assigned room or quarters, the furniture, fixtures (including window fixtures), equipment, and structural components contained therein.
- There are quiet hours Sunday to Thursday from 11pm to 10am, and Friday and Saturday from 2am-10am. There are also courtesy hours in effect 24 hours a day. During these hours you should take measures to not disturb other residents and if a resident asks you to be quiet, you should respect this request.
- You cannot have halogen or spider lamps.

#### *Roommate/Suitemate Agreements*

Another document that is available to you is a roommate/suitemate agreement. This document can assist you in having conversations with your roommates about living preferences. While it might seem silly, it is important to talk about who is going to be responsible for the cleaning, what items roommates will share, what your preferences are for studying, sleeping, and having guests, and how you are going to communicate about your differences.

## Off-Campus

Living, working, or spending time off-campus also comes with responsibilities to the community at large. Whether you live at home, in an apartment, or in a shared house, whether you go to the mall on the weekends, or take the train to New York City, building a good rapport with your neighbors helps build your own network as well as develops the reputation of the University. Our community service and our positive interactions with the community have already established Stony Brook's excellent reputation in the surrounding area and abroad. This reputation is what makes employers and businesses want to hire Stony Brook students and contribute to the life of the campus community.

Did you know that off-campus violations can have repercussions on-campus too? As discussed earlier, the Code of Conduct allows the University to take judicial action for serious violations that occur off-campus. A party off campus that results in underage drinking can be prosecuted in Suffolk County and result in judicial action on campus, too. Matty Punnett, Director of the Office of University Community Standards, sees these actions as primarily educational. She says, "The most important thing for students to understand is that even if you live off campus, you are still part of the University. We have resources to help you with whatever situation you might encounter: CPO, the Ombuds Office, Disability Support Services, the Dean of Students' Office, and the Counseling Center."

## Civility On-line

- **Remember the human being at the other end of the post.** Don't post anything you wouldn't say to someone's face.
- **Take responsibility for your own content.** Make sure you cite all content on your page that is not yours.
- **Take responsibility for other people's comments on your pages.** No matter whether you have started a blog or you just have a Facebook page, set the level of discourse high and take down comments that are inappropriate. Follow copyright rules and do not defame or threaten other people.
- **Stay positive. Be constructive.** Online forums often tend towards the negative, and it is easy to get sucked into

engaging with negative discussion. Your negative responses are unlikely to move other contributors and will serve to make you look bad.

- **Remain professional.** Follow the guidelines in your posts for civil discourse discussed earlier in this chapter. Before you click “share” think about whether you would want a potential employer to see your post. Comments linger. Uncivil or inappropriate comments, photos, and videos can remain attached to your name even after you have deleted them. Some human resources departments find ways around facebook restrictions and can reconstitute old posts that you think you have deleted.

## Civility in Cyberspace (Cyber Ethics)

The explosion of social networking and the ubiquitous sharing and posting of so much information online has changed the way we communicate. We must ensure that users understand their responsibilities for conducting themselves online. An important component of that is Cyber Ethics. Cyber Ethics refers to the code of responsible behavior on the Internet.

We should all employ the basic tenets of Cyber Ethics to be good “cyber citizens.” In the same way that each culture teaches its citizens the ethics of business, education, government, etc., those who use the Internet must be taught ethical practices in every aspect of its use. The power of the Internet means that anyone can communicate at any time, with anyone, anywhere. While this has undeniable benefits, there can also be negative consequences. Anonymous posting to blogs, websites and social media can encourage bad behavior by eliminating the need to stand behind the words used. A significant issue of increasing concern is cyber bullying. What were once comments confined to the school yard or hallways are now magnified by the power and anonymity of the Internet. Developments in electronic media offer new forums for bullies, and the actions can range in severity from cruel or embarrassing rumors to threats, harassment, or stalking. The effects can be far-reaching and long-lasting.

## What Are The Rules Of Ethical Cyber Activity?

The basic rule is do not do something in cyberspace that you would consider wrong or illegal in everyday life. When determining responsible behaviors, consider the following:

- Do not use rude or offensive language.
- Do not be a bully on the Internet. Do not call people names, lie about them, send embarrassing pictures of them, or do anything else to try to hurt them.
- Do not copy information from the Internet and claim it as yours.
- Adhere to copyright restrictions when downloading material, including software, games, movies, or music from the Internet.
- Do not break into someone else’s computer.
- Do not use someone else’s password.
- Do not attempt to infect or in any way try to make someone else’s computer unusable.

We were taught the rules of “right and wrong” growing up. We just need to apply the same rules to cyber space!

## Resources For More Information

Computer Crime & Intellectual Property Section -- United States Department of Justice

<http://www.justice.gov/criminal/cybercrime/>

Microsoft Safety & Security Center

<http://www.microsoft.com/security/online-privacy/cyberethics-practice.aspx>

Cyber Bullying Prevention Lessons- NCSA and CyberSmart!

<http://cybersmartcurriculum.org/cyberbullying/ncsa/>

Teaching your children acceptable behavior on the Internet

[http://us.norton.com/library/familyresource/article.jsp?aid=pr\\_cyberethics](http://us.norton.com/library/familyresource/article.jsp?aid=pr_cyberethics)

Cyber Citizen Partnership

<http://www.cybercitizenship.org/>

Division of the Center for Internet Security, MS- ISAC

[www.msisc.org/awareness/news/](http://www.msisc.org/awareness/news/)

