

GULF COAST STATE COLLEGE DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM

As directed in Federal law, 20 USC 1011i and 34 CFR 86.100(a), Gulf Coast State College has adopted and implemented a drug and alcohol abuse prevention program. In compliance with this Federal law, the college offers this narrative to demonstrate its commitment to provide students and employees a program to prevent the use of illicit drugs and the abuse of alcohol.

I. Standards of Conduct

Gulf Coast State College is committed to ensuring that the college provides a safe, responsible environment and articulates expectations to meet this end. The office of student affairs is responsible for student discipline and provides expectations, definitions and processes for discipline in the Gulf Coast State College Student Code of Conduct. Distribution of the code of conduct is achieved via the annual publication of the Student Handbook. The Student Code of Conduct is reviewed each year by the college's Student Affairs Council, which recommends any changes to the college's Executive Council for consideration and amendment. The Student Handbook is available via the college's website or available upon demand in the office of student affairs.

Expectations, definitions and processes related to professional conduct are included in the college's Employee Handbook published by the office of human resources. Specifically related to illicit drug and alcohol abuse, Gulf Coast State College employees are notified of the college's Drug-Free Workplace policy through the annual dissemination of the Employee Handbook. The Employee Handbook is available via the college's Intranet or available upon demand in the office of human resources.

Although the college's broad policy is in effect for all students and employees, students in limited access programs of allied and health sciences, public safety, and athletic teams are subject to program specific testing procedures. These conditions are set forth in the handbooks of each specific program. The college reserves the right to conduct drug testing of employees who are considered to be in safety-sensitive positions and in certain specialized academic programs that require instruction in medical clinical settings or instruction in specialized environments deemed sensitive.

II. College Sanctions for Violations

When the appropriate office receives notification of a violation of Gulf Coast State College policy, an investigation into the policy violation is initiated. After the investigation is completed in accordance with Federal constitutional protection and due process, the college will impose appropriate sanctions on employees and students who violate the college's policies and standards of conduct. Employees found in violation of the college's drug and alcohol policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and referral for prosecution by appropriate law enforcement officials. Students who are found in violation of the college's drug and alcohol policy will be subject to disciplinary action ranging from warning to expulsion and referral for prosecution by appropriate law enforcement officials.

holds that any person who distributes, possesses with intent to distribute, or manufactures a controlled substance on or within one thousand feet of an educational facility is subject to a doubling of the applicable maximum punishments and fines. See “Controlled Substances Act” 21 USC 800 et seq., Part D “Offenses and Penalties.”

IV. Health and Behavioral Risks

<http://www.floridahealthfinder.gov/HealthEncyclopedia/Health%20Illustrated%20Encyclopedia/1/001945.aspx>

The negative physical and mental effects of the use of alcohol and other drugs are well documented. Use of these drugs may cause: blackouts, poisoning, and overdose; physical and psychological dependence; damage to vital organs such as the brain, heart, and liver; inability to learn and remember information; and psychological problems including depression, psychosis, and severe anxiety. Risks associated with specific drugs are described later in this section.

Impaired judgment and coordination resulting from the use of alcohol and other drugs are associated with acquaintance assault and rape; DUI/DWI arrests; hazing; falls, drowning, and other injuries; contracting sexually-transmitted infections including AIDS; and unwanted or unplanned sexual experiences and pregnancy.

The substance abuse of family members and friends may also be of concern to individuals. Patterns of risk-taking behavior and dependency not only interfere in the lives of the abusers, but can also have a negative impact on the affected students’ academic work, emotional well-being, and adjustment to college life.

Individuals concerned about their own health or that of a friend should consult a physician or mental health professional. More information and assistance can be obtained by contacting the college’s counseling center or office of human resources.

Alcohol: Alcohol abuse is a progressive disorder in which physical dependency can develop. Even low doses of alcohol impair brain function, judgment, alertness, coordination, and reflexes. Very high doses cause suppression of respiration and death. Chronic alcohol abuse can produce dementia, sexual impotence, cirrhosis of the liver, and heart disease; and sudden withdrawal can produce severe anxiety, tremors, hallucinations, and life-threatening convulsions.

Marijuana (Cannabis): Marijuana has negative physical and mental effects. Physical effects include elevated blood pressure, a dry mouth and throat, bloodshot and swollen eyes, decrease in body temperature, and increased appetite. Frequent and/or long-time users may develop chronic lung disease and damage to the pulmonary system.

Use of marijuana is also associated with impairment of short-term memory and comprehension, an altered sense of time, and a reduction in the ability to perform motor skills, such as driving a car. Marijuana use also produces listlessness, inattention, withdrawal, and apathy. It also can intensify underlying emotional problems and is associated with chronic anxiety, depression, and paranoia.

Physical and psychological dependence is high, and severe withdrawal symptoms include watery eyes, runny nose, loss of appetite, irritability, tremors, panic, cramps, nausea, chills, and sweating. Use of contaminated syringes may cause AIDS and hepatitis. In addition, narcotics include common painkillers such as OxyContin, Vicodin, Lortab, Norco, Percocet, Percodan, Dolophine, and Methadose. These painkillers have similar addictive, overdose and withdrawal symptoms as traditional narcotics, and when combined with alcohol are particularly dangerous. Alcohol slows breathing and in combination with these drugs the effects could lead to life-threatening respiratory depression.

Synthetic Cannabinoids: Synthetic cannabinoids refer to a growing number of man-made mind-altering chemicals that are either sprayed on dried, shredded plant material so they can be smoked (herbal incense) or sold as liquids to be vaporized and inhaled in e-cigarettes and other devices (liquid incense).

These chemicals are called cannabinoids because they are related to chemicals found in the marijuana plant. Because of this similarity, synthetic cannabinoids are sometimes misleadingly called "synthetic marijuana" (or "fake weed"), and they are often marketed as "safe," legal alternatives to that drug. In fact, they may affect the brain much more powerfully than marijuana; their actual effects can be unpredictable and, in some cases, severe or even life-threatening.

Synthetic cannabinoids are included in a group of drugs called "new psychoactive substances" (NPS). NPS are unregulated psychoactive (mind-altering) substances that have become newly available on the market and are intended to copy the effects of illegal drugs. Some of these substances may have been around for years but have reentered the market in altered chemical forms or due to renewed popularity.

Manufacturers sell these herbal incense products in colorful foil packages and sell similar liquid incense products, like other e-cigarette fluids, in plastic bottles. They market these products under a wide variety of specific brand names; in past years, K2 and Spice were common. Hundreds of other brand names now exist, such as Joker, Black Mamba, Kush, and Kronik.

For several years, synthetic cannabinoid mixtures have been easy to buy in drug paraphernalia shops, novelty stores, gas stations, and through the Internet. Because the chemicals used in them have a high potential for abuse and no medical benefit, authorities have made it illegal to sell, buy, or possess some of these chemicals. However, manufacturers try to sidestep these laws by changing the chemical formulas in their mixtures.

Easy access and the belief that synthetic cannabinoid products are "natural" and therefore harmless have likely contributed to their use among young people. Another reason for their use is that standard drug tests cannot easily detect many of the chemicals used in these products.