

BOARD POLICY

No. 903-A

TITLE: Responsible Involvement of Persons in the Decision-Making Process of the College

DATE ADOPTED: February 27, 2019

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 27, 2019

SUPERSEDES: September 20, 1973

PURPOSE:

In its philosophy, board policies, and operating procedures, Rowan College at Burlington County is committed to student and staff involvement in the life and governance of the institution. All members of the college community have many opportunities to participate in the decision-making process. This commitment is underlined in the following statements from the College Mission Statement.

POLICY:

1. “Rowan College at Burlington County is dedicated to those humanistic and intellectual values inherent in the ideals of the American democratic state. The College recognizes each student as a human being in search of his own destiny; and the College strives to teach those principles which foster brotherhood, individual freedom, and personal responsibility. Its total resources are available to assist the student in his quest.”

“As a comprehensive two-year public community college, Rowan College at Burlington County is part of one of the most dynamic movements in American higher education. The College, as an open-door institution, is committed to extending the advantages of higher education to all who can benefit from the experience. The educational programs of the College are creative, flexible and dynamically designed to serve better the people of the County, industry, labor, and the professions. The systematic pursuit of excellence in teaching and learning is the essence of Rowan College at Burlington County.”



“As an investment in the human and economic resources of the County, Rowan College at Burlington County is ultimately dedicated to becoming an open educational laboratory for community interaction and cultural enrichment.”

The Board of Trustees hereby affirms that such involvement in the life and governance of Rowan College at Burlington County is essential, since the College is a microcosm of our democratic society.

2. More specifically, Rowan College at Burlington County believes in and encourages rational discussion of all issues affecting its mission in the community, state and nation. As an institution of higher learning, the College provides a climate for free communication and consideration of varying points of view, both within and outside of the formal learning environment. The basic law of an academic institution is the rule of reason, which only functions in “an atmosphere free of any form of coercion - intellectual or physical – on our campus.”¹ The debate of issues – a questioning attitude – a search after truth - constructive criticism – the right to all of these academic freedoms is affirmed as the college community seeks cooperative solutions to complex issues and problems, both on campus and in the life of the broader community. Furthermore, the rights of individuals or groups to dissent, demonstrate, or protest peacefully in a manner that is constructive and non-disruptive to the regular functioning of the College is likewise assured. As the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education has asserted, a college should protect “free non-violent and non-interruptive expression of views.”² The right of responsible dissent is recognized and affirmed, so long as the rights of other persons are respected.

This institution acknowledges that all procedures promulgated hereunder shall be consistent with due process. This requires that everyone – those, alike, who might dissent from or might support a decision or view – be allowed to express their opinion. But due process does not include or allow an attempt to impose by force a point of view contrary to a thoughtful decision previously made. Due process requires no less than acceptance of the decision of others, once all opinions have been considered.

3. Rowan College at Burlington County can and will maintain a decision-making atmosphere free of coercion so long as all persons and groups accept their individual responsibility in a democracy, and are willing to recognize the rights of others. However, if some cannot accept the principles expressed in this statement, and attempt to use intimidation or coercion themselves, the College will employ whatever moral and lawful means are necessary to insure the rights of all persons and to maintain the operation of the College.

Specifically, any attempted interference with or disruption of the normal operations and activities of the College cannot and will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, unauthorized occupation of buildings or portions thereof; vandalism or destruction of property; obstruction of traffic or of the legitimate movement of individuals on campus, any act of trespass, or any other attempted disruption of regular College operations. “Students and faculty whose consciences demand that they express dissent through law violation must be prepared to accept the due processes and the penalties of the law.”³ They may not expect amnesty from the effects of the law or from academic discipline.

4. The President of the College is responsible for administering this policy, and is directed to develop the necessary procedures to assure its implementation.

¹ Edward E. Booher, Chairman, State Board of Higher Education, Memorandum, March 7, 1969. P.2.

² Ibid.

³ *A Declaration on Campus Unrest*, American Council D.C., April 1969.

President

Date:

Chairman

Date: