Helping Students in Distress
College Resource Guide for Faculty and Staff

Students Experiencing Difficulty
The Office of the Assistant Vice President of Student Services and Dean of Students has developed this resource guide primarily to aid faculty and staff in assisting students experiencing various difficulties including crisis situations. Critical Student Information can be found at www.roanestate.edu/deanofstudents.

In case of an emergency, contact Campus Police first: RSCC has multiple campus locations so be aware of your campus location’s open and closing days and times. Call 911 in an emergency situation when safety is an immediate concern. Please visit the Campus Police website at www.roanestate.edu/police for information regarding campus safety procedures.

Roane County (865) 882-4500
Oak Ridge (865) 481-2000
Campbell (423) 662-4021
Cumberland (931) 456-9880 (Central Standard Time zone)
Fentress (931) 752-8320 (Central Standard Time zone)
Knox (865) 539-6904
Loudon (865) 886-1525
Morgan (423) 346-8700
Scott (423) 663-3878

Other emergency contacts:
Counseling/Career/Disability Services (Roane/Harriman Campus) (865) 882-4546
Counseling/Career/Disability Services (Oak Ridge Campus) (865) 481-2003
Asst. VP/Dean of Students (865) 882-4550 or ext. 4546

Local Resources, such as domestic violence, counseling hot line, suicide hot lines and other community resources are on the Counseling web page at www.roanestate.edu/counseling, then click on “Community Resource Quick Reference List” or contact one of our counseling offices above for an appointment.

The RSCC Counselors, Campus Police/Security, and the Asst. VP/Dean of Students Offices primarily comprise the RSCC Threat Assessment Team which is chaired by the Asst. VP/Dean of Students. In the event of a Student Crisis on any RSCC campus, this team will facilitate efforts to assist the student and provide support for faculty and staff. Other campus administrators, faculty and staff may be needed to assist as relevant to the crisis situation per campus.

College Emergency Response Plan: For detailed information on RSCC’s emergency response procedures for all locations (campus lock down, natural disaster, campus drills, etc. go to www.roanestate.edu/police. Please familiarize yourself with these procedures as timely communications and preparedness are critical factors in preventing or de-escalating crisis situations on campus and saving lives.

Dangerous Student or Unknown Individual
Safety is an immediate concern; Verbal or physical threats to harm others; Active threats of suicide and resists help.

If student or unknown individual is dangerous or threatening harm to self or others call Campus Police/Security first.

If safety is an immediate concern call 911.

For Mental Health Consultation or referral Counseling/Career/Disability Services Roane/Harriman Campus (865) 882-4546 Oak Ridge Campus (865) 481-2003
After hours contact Campus Police or call 911.

Disruptive or Disturbing Student
Safety is not an immediate concern; Threatens harm to self or others, but will accept help; Demonstrates bizarre behavior or communications; Disruptive to the learning environment.

For Asst. VP/Dean of Students Consultation (865) 882-4550 After hours contact Campus Police/Security or call 911.

Distressed or Troubled Student
A student who is confused, very sad, highly anxious, irritable, lacks motivation and/or concentration; has thoughts about not wanting to live; difficulties in interactions with others.

For Mental Health Consultation or referral Counseling/Career/Disability Services Roane/Harriman Campus (865) 882-4546 Oak Ridge Campus (865) 481-2003
After hours contact Campus Police or call 911.

For Academic Issues or Concerns Vice President of Student Learning (865) 882-4513 Dean of Humanities (865) 882-4567 Dean of Social Science, Business, & Education (865) 882-4562 Dean of Mathematics & Sciences (865) 882-4533 Dean of Nursing (865) 882-4606 Dean of Allied Health Sciences (865) 539-6904 After hours contact Campus Police/Security or call 911.

For Asst. VP/Dean of Students (865) 882-4550 After hours contact Campus Police/Security or call 911.
Understanding Behaviors of Concern

As a faculty or staff member, you are in an excellent position to recognize behavior changes that may characterize an emotionally distressed or troubled student. A student’s concerning behavior, especially if it is inconsistent with your previous observations, could reflect a need for intervention or be a “cry for help.” The college years can be very stressful for many. In the contemporary climate of competition, erosion of civility in society and pressure, some students find the stress unmanageable and can interfere with learning. In some cases, these students may even disrupt the learning of others. In every situation of distress your calm, caring and helpful attitude will be critical as you assist the student. Please remember that your safety as well as the student is a priority as well in times of crisis.

### Signs of Disturbed Student

The behavior of the disturbed student often makes those around him/her feel vaguely uncomfortable on some level. Generally, it seems that the disturbed student is acting irrationally or out of sync with reality that is perceived by others. Signs include but are not limited to:

- Impaired speech and disjointed thoughts.
- Emotional responses that may be incongruent and/or inappropriate.
- Expressed suicidal thoughts (e.g., referring to suicide as a current option).
- Self-mutilating behaviors, including cutting or burning of the self.
- Frequent or high levels of irritable or abrasive behavior.
- Unable to make decisions despite your repeated efforts to clarify or encourage.
- Bizarre behavior that is obviously inappropriate for the situation (e.g., talking to something/ someone that is not present).
- Report of sexual or physical assault, or the recent death of a friend or family member.
- Disclosing suspicious and/or paranoid thoughts.

**HOW TO RESPOND AND REFERRAL:**

- If there is no immediate threat, speak with the student privately. You may consider having someone join with you and the student. Document all conversations.
- Forward the documentation to the Assistant VP of Student Services/Dean of Students or RSCC Counseling Center or Campus Police/Security to help determine the level of threat or risk for the student and the campus.
- When meeting with the student, express your concern for their behavior, and set appropriate limits for their interactions with you in and out of the classroom.
- It is generally not helpful to argue with such student or try to convince them of their irrationality. It is also generally not helpful to “play along” and reinforce any delusions.
- It may be helpful to acknowledge the student’s feelings without supporting the misperception (e.g., “I understand you are hearing voices, but I cannot hear them, and I believe you are safe.”)
- Document each incident of inappropriate behavior.
- Contact a counselor, senior administrator, or the Assistant VP of Student Services/Dean of Students for consultation and assistance in responding to the student. Talk with your supervisor for additional assistance. The RSCC Threat Assessment Team, chaired by the Dean of Students will help determine the level of concern for the student and the campus.
- If the student is disruptive in class, she/he may be asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of the class period. In such a case, the faculty member should contact the Asst. VP of Student Services/Dean of Students, or a Senior Administrator or Campus Police/Security for further instructions regarding the student’s potential return to the classroom. If the student is to be removed for longer than the remainder of the class period, faculty must contact the Asst. VP of Student Services/Dean of Students to file appropriate forms so that the incident can be addressed in accordance with student due process procedures.
- If a student refuses to leave the classroom, faculty should contact Campus Police/Security immediately for assistance.

### Signs of Distressed or Troubled Students

Generally, the behavior of the distressed or troubled student causes concern for the personal well-being of that student, rather than creating a worry for their impact on others or on the classroom. Some signs include but are not limited to:

- Excessive procrastination and very poorly prepared work, especially inconsistent with previous work; Inefficient class attendance with little or no work completed;
- Dependency (e.g., the student who makes excessive appointments during office hours, sends frequent e-mail messages);
- Listlessness, lack of energy, or frequently falling asleep in class;
- Marked changes in personal hygiene;
- Students who appear overly nervous, tense or tearful;
- Repeated request for special consideration (e.g. deadline extensions);
- Report of sexual or physical assault, or the recent death of a friend or family member;
- Overt inattentiveness.

**HOW TO RESPOND AND REFERRAL:**

- Speak with the student privately. Consider having someone meet with you and the student.
- Document all conversations. As you deem necessary or as required by school policy, forward the documentation to the Assistant VP of Student Services and Dean of Students or the RSCC Counseling Center.
- Let the student know that you think that they may be feeling down and, if possible, that you would like to help. Address the situation on an individual level; be as specific as possible in stating your observations and reason for concern.
- Avoid criticizing and sounding judgmental.
- Encourage the student to seek help through campus counseling services or private counseling services. Remind the student that counseling services are confidential. Offer to help make the initial contact with counseling services or helping resource.
- Report to a counselor or the Assistant VP of Student Services/Dean of Students or Campus Police/Security any instance in which a student confides in you that he/she is considering suicide. Also contact a counselor for consultation and assistance if the student shares other information that is of concern to you (e.g., self harm, harm to others, withdrawing from school, etc.).
Policy and Procedure Information

RSCC Threat Assessment Team
The RSCC Threat Assessment Team is a multidisciplinary team of professionals whose purpose is to provide compassion and timely response whenever there is a threat or eruption of student violence on an RSCC campus. If perceived in a timely manner, the team could meet to determine threat and possibly prevent the occurrence of a full blown crisis. It is a coordinated effort by team members to assess and intervene with students whose disturbing or dangerous behavior could prove harmful to self or others. The team primarily consists of the Asst. VP of Student Services/Dean of Students as chair, Campus Police/Security, Counselors, and other administrators, faculty and staff that convene as needed per campus situation. For further information, contact the Asst. VP of Student Services/Dean of Students at (865) 882-4550.

RSCC Student Disciplinary Policy (SA-06-01)
Roane State Community College has a duty to provide a secure and stimulating atmosphere in which individual and academic pursuits may flourish. Therefore students, faculty and staff are expected to conduct themselves as law-abiding members of the college and the many communities in which RSCC provides an educational experience. These policies apply to all on and off campus sponsored activities including Allied Health program clinical site affiliations. The office of the Assistant VP of Student Services/Dean of Students is responsible for the continued updates to policies governing student conduct and due process procedures required when a student is charged with violation(s) of the student conduct policy including academic misconduct (cheating, plagiarism).

Student Appeals: Due process for students includes not only the right to a hearing if charged with misconduct but an opportunity to appeal some disciplinary decisions as outlined in the student conduct policy including academic misconduct (cheating, plagiarism). The student may also waive their right to a hearing or appeal. For a detailed view of the full RSCC Student Disciplinary Policy (SA-06-01), see www.roanestate.edu/policies or call the Asst. VP of Student Services/Dean of Students (865) 882-4550 or ext. 4546.

Student Complaint Form: If a student feels he/she has not received fair treatment, or has a complaint regarding some situation or condition or procedure (e.g., financial aid, tuition, refunds, advisement, records, facilities, classroom concerns, student conduct, etc.) at the college, the student may address the complaint in writing by completing the online Student Complaint Form at the following link www.roanestate.edu/studentcomplaints. The Asst. VP of Student Services/Dean of Students will communicate with all appropriate college officials to verify reports and provide support services to the student’s family as well as the faculty, staff and students as appropriate.

Class Attendance
1. Attendance of classes and other official appointments is expected and may be included in the calculation of a student’s final grade.
2. An explanation of absences should be given to instructors. This information should be presented in advance if possible.
3. Absences are counted from the first scheduled meeting of the class. Non-attendance does not constitute a withdrawal from classes or from the college. Procedures to formally drop a course or to withdraw from the college must be followed. FOLLOWING THESE PROCEDURES MAY PREVENT A FAILING GRADE ON A STUDENT’S TRANSCRIPT.
4. Some Health Science and Nursing programs may have attendance requirements that affect progress or retention in the program. Contact the program director for detailed information.
5. Attendance will be monitored for students who receive Title IV financial aid funds. Lack of attendance could mandate administrative withdrawal and necessitate the repayment of financial aid funds. Information can be found in RSCC Catalog online at www.roanestate.edu/catalog.

Student Emergency Calls, Student Illness Notification, Student Death Notification:
- Emergency calls: The only option the college has to locate a student on campus is via the student’s class schedule. We will not be able to locate students if they are not in class. Therefore there must be an extreme emergency to justify interrupting the classroom. The office of the Assistant VP of Student Services/Dean of Students or designee will determine the legitimacy of the emergency call. An extreme emergency would include a sick child needing to be picked up at daycare; a serious injury to a family member; a death in the family, or some other traumatizing event. Other general messages or reminders regarding personal business will not be delivered to the student. Please contact the office of the Asst. VP of Student Services/Dean of Students at (865) 882-4550 or Campus Police/Security at (865) 882-4500 if you need assistance.
- Student Illness Notification: Students should contact their instructors immediately if absent from class or an exam/quiz. Students should follow the instructor’s syllabus for absence policy for each class which may require documentation of any excused medical absences. The Office of the Asst. VP of Student Services/Dean of Students will assist the student with notification by email alerting instructors of student absence if needed, see RSCC Catalog at www.roanestate.edu/catalog.
- Student Death Notification: In the unfortunate event of the death of a currently enrolled student, the Registrar’s office will place a restriction on the student’s records following official notification. Faculty and staff receiving information that a RSCC student has died are asked to contact the Registrar at (865) 882-4364 and the Asst. VP of Student Services/Dean of Students. The Asst. VP of Student Services/Dean of Students will communicate with all appropriate college officials to verify reports and provide support services to the student’s family as well as the faculty, staff and students as appropriate.

Campus Safety and Security
Reporting Procedures for the Crime Awareness & Campus Security Act of 1990: Any student, employee, or visitor on any RSCC campus should report the incidence of criminal activity to the Campus Police/Security Office at ext. 4500 or toll free at (866) 462-7772 ext. 4500 during the day and after hours.

TEXT-A-TIP: Students (faculty and staff as well) may now report an incidence of crime ANONYMOUSLY via texting to campus police/security from any RSCC campus location. Please encourage students to pick up a TEXT-A-TIP card at any campus. More information can be found in RaiderNet. Criminal Activity at any satellite location can also be reported to the campus director who, in turn, will report to appropriate officials.

Campus Counseling, Career, and Disability Services and Community Resources:
Counseling and Career Services was established to aid students in successfully completing their college work and establishing good foundations for future growth. Counselors provide a wide range of services including: short-term personal counseling, career assessments and counseling, entrance academic advising and disability services. RSCC complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Any student who has a disability that would like to request accommodations must contact Counseling, Career, and Disability Services to self-identify and to provide appropriate and current documentation of the disability from a qualified professional provider. Participation in these services is voluntary and confidential. See Disability Handbook at www.roanestate.edu/disabilityservices and www.roanestate.edu/careerservices for all other services. Offices are located in Oak Ridge campus at (865) 481-2003 or Harriman/Roane campus at (865) 882-4546. Although walk-in services are offered, if at all possible, please make an appointment prior to visit to insure counselor availability.

RSCC is a Tennessee Board of Regents Institution and an AA/EEO Institution. RSCC Publication #12-023.
**Dangerous Student FAQ**

**Signs of Dangerous Student**
The behavior of the dangerous student threatens the health and well-being of those around him/her. Examples include but are not limited to:
- Conduct dangerous to others. Any conduct which constitutes a serious danger to any person’s health, safety or personal well-being, including any physical abuse or immediate threat of abuse (e.g., fighting, threats of violence, use of weapons, etc.).
- Disorderly conduct. Any individual or group behavior which is abusive, obscene, lewd, indecent, violent, excessively noisy, disorderly, or which unreasonably disturbs other groups or individuals (e.g., violent protests)
- Verbal or written expressed suicidal thoughts, threats, or the making of suicidal gestures.
- Self-mutilating behaviors, including cutting or burning of the self.
- Threats to others.
- Carrying or brandishing a weapon.
- Intimidating behaviors, including inappropriate touching, verbal or written threats, standing too close to others, harassment or stalking.

**HOW TO RESPOND AND REFERRAL:**
- Contact Campus Police/Security or local law enforcement immediately.
- Do not delay assistance by calling counselors or other administrators for assistance. The first call should be to law enforcement.
- Avoid escalating the situation; speak calmly and with concern.
- Avoid physical contact.
- If the student poses an immediate danger to others, faculty may choose to dismiss the class while waiting for police intervention.
- Use good judgment to protect your safety and the safety of others. Do not attempt to keep the student from leaving the classroom.
- Document the incident including any witnesses that were present and forward the documents to the Asst. VP of Student Services/Dean of Students and Campus Police/Security responsible for threat assessment procedures with threatening students.

**In a campus emergency, how will YOU stay informed? Use these three sources:**

1. Roane State website:  [www.roanestate.edu](http://www.roanestate.edu)
2. Roane State official Facebook page:  [www.facebook.com/roanestate](http://www.facebook.com/roanestate)
3. Roane State official Twitter:  [www.twitter.com/roanestate](http://www.twitter.com/roanestate)

These sources will help you get critical information during a campus emergency.