

Approved by Council in spring 2008 as part of review and rewrite of RIC Handbook Chapter 3 (Academic Policies and Procedures)

(this is the version that should be posted online)

3.18 WEB POLICY

The purpose of the Rhode Island College Web is to provide information about the College, its mission and services, its faculty and students, and its events and programs. In addition, the World Wide Web provides access to local and global scholarly resources. In accordance with its mission of teaching, research, and public service, the College supports the use of the World Wide Web by the College community.

The Rhode Island College presence on the World Wide Web is identified by the Universal Resource Locator (URL) www.ric.edu and is an official publication of Rhode Island College. Accordingly, all publishers on www.ric.edu must conform to College policies, ethical codes, rules and regulations, and standards of conduct. Pertinent statements of such policies and rules are found in the *College Handbook of Policies, Practices, and Regulations*, the *Student Handbook*, *The Policy for Responsible Computing at Rhode Island College*, the *Collective Bargaining Agreements*, and *College Catalog*, as well as other sources. There are also federal, state, and local laws governing many interactions that occur on the Internet. Publishers need to be aware of their responsibilities and of the process for adjudicating violations. They are responsible for ensuring that their page content is appropriate and accurate.

3.18.1 Governance

The Web Advisory Committee is a standing Presidential Committee and acts as an advisory board to the President for web policy. Decisions on areas and departments permitted on www.ric.edu are made by the Web Advisory Committee, based on conformance to College mission and goals and considerations of space and design.

Members of the Web Advisory Committee shall be appointed by the President to three-year terms that shall begin on July 1; the membership shall be appointed in a manner so as to ensure that the terms of approximately one-third of the membership shall expire each year. There are no restrictions on re-appointment of members. The President shall select one member to serve as Chair. The Special Assistant to the President for Web Services shall serve as a member of the Committee, *ex officio*.

The Special Assistant to the President for Web Services is responsible for implementing and enforcing web policy, managing web services, and coordinating campus web publishing.

In order to achieve consistency and coherence between the Homepage and subsequent pages, the College Web Manager will have authority over matters of design, format navigation, and organization. Content is the responsibility of the department, office, or organization to which the web page pertains, and shall conform to College Web Publishing Guidelines [see 3.18.6 (c)]. Every department, office, or organization that maintains a presence on the College Web shall identify a contact to the Special Assistant to the President for Web Services for this purpose.

3.18.2 Right to Publish

Pages may be published on the Rhode Island College Web by

- (a) officially constituted academic departments, programs, or centers
- (b) administrative departments
- (c) student organizations officially recognized by the College
- (d) officially recognized College committees and affiliates

Faculty and staff may publish pages related to their work at the College. For example, faculty members might publish their *curriculum vitae*, research findings, or course syllabi.

Because the College Web is an official publication of Rhode Island College, and in recognition of the need to protect the integrity of the College's internet technology as well as the privacy of student work, student-produced web-based assignments or other coursework shall be directed to servers other than those on which www.ric.edu resides.

Faculty and staff access to College web publishing resources requires sponsorship by an official unit as defined in Section 3.18.6. Faculty and staff pages are to be linked from their department or office pages. The linking of faculty and staff pages is at the discretion of the department or office which in so doing assumes responsibility for these pages. Faculty and staff may not use the College Web to engage in any commercial activity not related to the College. For example, a faculty author may post a link to an on-line bookseller's page displaying the author's work for sale; however, an individual may not use the College Web to advertise rental property.

Normally, when a faculty member, staff member, or organization ceases to be associated with Rhode Island College, their web page or pages shall cease to be published on the College Web. The Special Assistant to the President for Web Services may forward any such files to the owner, if contact information is available. Upon request of the owner, the Special Assistant to the President for Web Services, in consultation with the Web Advisory Committee, may continue to publish such page or pages if it is deemed in the interest of the College. However, maintenance of the page or pages, including any updates, shall be the sole responsibility of the owner and not the College.

Other Rhode Island College entities and affiliates may request inclusion on the College Web. The Web Advisory Committee will consider each request on a case-by-case basis.

3.18.3 Enforcement

The College reserves the right to remove any information or links to information published on the College Web in violation of these policies.

Alleged violations of this policy shall be addressed according to applicable College policy. Rhode Island College treats access and use violations of computing facilities, equipment, software, information resources, networks, or privileges seriously and may also prosecute abuse

under the General Laws of Rhode Island, Title 11, Chapter 52: Computer Crime, the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986, or other appropriate laws (from *The Policy For Responsible Computing At Rhode Island College*, 9 May 1997).

3.18.4 Implementation

The Special Assistant to the President for Web Services, in consultation with the Web Advisory Committee, will develop guidelines for the implementation of this policy and publish these guidelines as appropriate.

3.18.5 Disclaimer

A link to the following language, which shall serve as a disclaimer, shall be posted on the top page:

The Rhode Island College web site is comprised of pages of officially constituted academic departments, programs, or centers, administrative offices, student organizations that are officially recognized by the College, and officially recognized College committees and affiliates. While every effort is made to maintain current and accurate information on the College Web, all materials maintained on the Rhode Island College web servers are provided "as is" with no warranties of any kind.

These pages were prepared on the basis of the information available at the time of publication. Therefore, specific statements, including but not limited to fees, dates, course offerings, admission requirements, financial aid practice and policies, graduation requirements, and other procedures or policies may be subject to change without notice.

Any individual views or opinions appearing on the College Web are strictly those of the individual author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Rhode Island College.

3.18.7 Web Publishing Guidelines

The Web Advisory Committee and the Special Assistant to the President for Web Services shall be responsible for the ongoing review and revision of these guidelines, as appropriate.

(a) Responsibilities of College Entities Seeking Inclusion on the College Web

Before a departmental, office, or organizational web site is published on the College Web, the department, office or organization must identify a contact who is responsible for maintaining the accuracy and currency of information on that site.

(b) Web Producers

Normally, the Office of Web Services shall be responsible for the production of departmental, office, and organizational web sites within the www.ric.edu domain. However, with the approval of the Special Assistant to the President for Web Services, such entities may employ or assign individuals or contract with outside vendors, in accordance with established College policy, to produce and/or maintain web sites that

reside on or are directly linked to www.ric.edu. Such individuals or vendors, for the purpose of this policy, are to be known as “Web Producers.”

To obtain a Web Producer account, a completed Web Producer contract, including the signature of the person in charge of the department, office, or organization requesting the account, shall be submitted to the Special Assistant to the President for Web Services. Representatives of student groups must obtain the signature of the Director of Student Activities.

If the request conforms to web policy and guidelines, a Web Producer account will be created and space on a server will be assigned. Web Producers will be notified via e-mail when an account has been established.

Web Producers must abide by all rules and conditions that govern the College Web, including those stated in official policy as well as those promulgated by the Special Assistant to the President for Web Services.

These rules and conditions include but are not limited to the following:

- i.* Established page guidelines must be observed [see 13-18-6 (c)].
- ii.* All U.S. and international copyright and licensing laws and acceptable practices related to those laws must be observed.
- iii.* Information presented shall be limited to that which furthers the College’s mission of teaching, research, and service, or otherwise serves the public of Rhode Island College.
- iv.* Prior to initial publication, all pages or collections of pages developed by Web Producers shall be reviewed and approved by the Special Assistant to the President for Web Services. Such review shall also apply to instances of significant changes to pages or collections of pages; however, review shall not be necessary for the updating of content.

The College reserves the right to amend or to remove any information or links to information published on the College Web in violation of these policies, including inaccurate or dated information. The Special Assistant to the President for Web Services may also revoke any and all permissions granted to a Web Producer in such instances.

(c) Page Guidelines

- i.* All pages or related collections of pages must have a clearly identifiable College “owner” -- an organization or individual who will be held accountable for that information; *e.g.*, its timeliness, accuracy, reliability, and adherence to national, local, and College policies and guidelines. “Owners” must be clearly identified, including specific names, e-mail addresses and other contact information.
- ii.* Each web page should indicate the date when it was created or last revised.

- iii.* Pages shall contain navigation aids consistent with standards established by the Web Manager. Departmental, office, and organizational homepages must include a link to the Rhode Island College homepage. Other departmental, office, and organizational pages shall include links to the homepage of the respective department, office, or organization.
- iv.* Generally, the College Web shall not be used for commercial purposes or link to commercial sites that are unrelated to the mission of the College.
- v.* Each page must contain meaningful text in the html title field.
- vi.* Pages shall be designed in such a manner so as to respect the technical limitations of the College's resources as well as those of internet consumers. Such issues may include bandwidth, CPU time, disk space, page loading time, accessibility, security, confidentiality, and other factors specified periodically by the Special Assistant to the President for Web Services.
- vii.* Audio content is permitted; however, the page default in all such cases shall be in the "off" mode.
- viii.* Video or other dynamic visual content is permitted; however, the user shall have a clear option to close any such content.
- ix.* The use of any "plug-in" program for the operation of any portion of a web page must be approved in advance by the Special Assistant to the President for Web Services, who shall have full discretion in this regard.
- x.* Prior to publication, all pages on the College Web shall be tested to ensure that they are compatible with all browsers and platforms supported by the College.
- xi.* All pages shall be designed for a standardized screen resolution as determined by the Special Assistant to the President for Web Services.
- xii.* All elements on a page that are designed to be active, such as buttons, links, or plug-ins, shall be functional.
- xiii.* The Special Assistant to the President for Web Services reserves the right to post changes or updates to departmental, office, or organizational web sites if necessary; however, the responsibility for providing accurate content remains with the department, office, or organization. Failure to maintain accurate and timely information may result in the revocation of access and removal of the page or pages from the Rhode Island College Web.
- xiv.* The use of all College logos, symbols, and other design elements shall be consistent with design standards established by the Office of Publishing Services.