



News | Nov 23, 2011

Seattle Community Colleges Trustees approve Emergency Rule on camping

SEATTLE – Trustees at the Seattle Community Colleges voted today to approve an Emergency Rule prohibiting camping on college property. The vote came during a special board meeting that included testimony from students, college representatives, and members of the Occupy Seattle encampment that took up residence at Seattle Central Community College on Oct 29.

The emergency rule becomes effective Monday.

College officials pledged to work with Occupy Seattle to close the camp. “Our goal is to ensure an orderly process for the campers to leave Seattle Central Community College,” said Seattle Community Colleges Chancellor Jill Wakefield. “Next week, we will be meeting with the campers to notify them that they need to move.”

Close to 100 people and a dozen large dogs have been living in tents on a lawn area at the south end of the campus, which is located on Capitol Hill near downtown Seattle.

Dr. Wakefield brought the measure to the board following reports from the Seattle-King County Environmental Health Services Division which noted numerous health and safety issues, including garbage accumulation, improper food handling, feces, and drug and alcohol use.

“Our primary concern has been the safety and well-being of our students, employees and the campers. Public safety and health violations have been increasing, and I’m convinced we have reached a state of emergency,” she said.

The rule is an amendment to Washington Administrative Code (132F-136-030) outlining permissible activities on Seattle Community Colleges property. The new rule, which becomes Section 14, states: “College property may not be used for camping, defined to include sleeping, carrying on cooking activities, storing personal belongings, or the erection of tents or other shelters or structures used for purposes of personal habitation.”

The Emergency Rule will be in effect for 120 days. The college district is also developing a permanent policy.

In her remarks, Chancellor Wakefield affirmed the value of free speech. “As educators, we support free speech and the exchange of ideas that inform our society,” she said. “However, with Occupy Seattle living on the campus of Seattle Central Community College, we are talking about an unsafe environment, and not about First Amendment rights.”

The Seattle Community Colleges:

In addition to Seattle Central, the college district also includes North Seattle and South Seattle Community College, Seattle Vocational Institute and four specialized training centers, including Seattle Maritime Academy, Wood Construction Center, New Holly Learning Center and the Georgetown Campus.

CONTACT

Patricia Paquette, Communications Director
206.934.4105

Patricia.Paquette@seattlecolleges.edu

SEATTLE
CENTRAL
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

NORTH
SEATTLE
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

SOUTH
SEATTLE
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

SVI SEATTLE
VOCATIONAL
INSTITUTE

Georgetown
Campus

NewHolly
Learning Center

Seattle Maritime
Academy

Wood
Construction
Center

Washington District VI

1500 Harvard Avenue
Seattle, WA 98122-3803
206.934.4100
Fax 206.934.3894

www.seattlecolleges.edu