NOTIFICATION REGARDING MISSING RESIDENTIAL STUDENTS

I. PURPOSE

To establish a missing residential student notification policy and related procedures.

II. LEGAL REFERENCE

Effective August 14, 2008, the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 requires any institution participating in a Title IV federal student financial aid program that maintains on campus housing facilities to establish a missing student notification policy and related procedures (20 USC 1092 (j) Section 488 of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.)

III. POLICY

In the interest of student safety, and in order to comply with Section 488 of the Higher Education Act of 2008, Wharton County Junior College establishes the following procedures regarding students residing in on-campus housing who have been determined to be missing.

(POLICY APPROVAL: 4-15-14, Board of Trustees)

IV. PROCEDURES

A. At the beginning of each academic year, WCJC will inform students residing in on-campus housing that WCJC will, within 24 hours of a determination that an on-campus student is missing, notify either a parent or the contact person(s) previously designated by the student.

B. If any person believes that a WCJC student is missing, the person should make a report to the Office of Campus Security and Public Safety.

C. The Vice President of Student Services will initiate emergency contact procedures in accordance with the student’s designations if Campus Security has been notified of, and makes a determination that, a student who is the subject of a missing person report has been missing for more than 24 hours and has not returned to campus, or if a local law enforcement agency notifies WCJC that it has determined a student residing on WCJC’s campus to be missing.

D. Each student living in on-campus housing will be given the option of identifying a person or persons to be contacted by WCJC not later than 24 hours after the time that the student is determined to be missing. Students can register this contact information confidentially through the WCJC Office of Campus Security and Public Safety. Access to this information will be limited to authorized campus personnel, such as Office of Campus Security and Public Safety, the Office of the Vice President of Student Services, the Vice President of Administrative Services, and the President.

E. If a student is under 18 years of age, and not an emancipated individual, WCJC is required to notify a custodial parent or guardian (in addition to any other contact person designated by the student) and the notification must occur not later than 24 hours after the student is determined to be missing.

F. Regardless of whether the student has named a confidential contact person under this procedure, WCJC will notify any appropriate local law enforcement agencies not later than 24 hours after the student is determined
to be missing.

G. WCJC will follow the notification procedure below for a missing student who resides in on-campus housing. Once WCJC receives a missing student report via Office of Campus Security and Public Safety, the office of the Vice President of Student Services, Vice President of Administrative Services, or another source, the following WCJC offices will be notified:

1. Office of Campus Security and Public Safety
2. President
3. Vice President of Student Services
4. Vice President of Administrative Services
5. Vice President of Technology and Institutional Research
6. Vice President of Instruction
7. Office of Marketing and Communications

H. If, upon investigation of the official report, the Office of Campus Security and Public Safety determines that the student has been missing for more than 24 hours, the Vice President of Student Services will contact the following:

1. The person confidentially identified by such student,
2. The custodial parent or legal guardian if the student is under 18 years of age and not emancipated, and

The Director of Security and Public Safety will contact the following:

3. Any appropriate local law enforcement agencies.

I. Upon notification from any entity that any WCJC student may be missing, WCJC will use any of the following resources to assist in locating the student. These resources may be used in any order and combination:

1. The Office of Campus Security and Public Safety,
2. The Office of the Vice President of Student Services,
3. The Vice President of Administrative Services, and
4. The President.

J. Any of these entities may be asked to assist in physically locating the student by accessing the student’s assigned room and talking with known associates.

K. Any or all of the following actions may be taken in attempts to locate any WCJC Missing Student:

1. The Office of Campus Security and Public Safety may search on campus public locations to find the student (library, academic buildings, etc.).
2. The Office of Campus Security and Public Safety may issue a community notice, including photographs of the student, to assist in locating the missing student in accordance with the Office of Marketing and Communication.

3. The Offices of Campus Security and Public Safety and the Vice President of Student Services may try to contact known friends, family, or faculty members for last sightings or additional contact information.

4. Academic departments may be contacted to seek information on last sighting or other contact information.

5. Security access card logs may be checked to determine last use of the missing student’s card and detect future uses of the card.

6. The Office of Campus Security and Public Safety may access vehicle registration information for vehicle location and distribution to appropriate authorities.

7. WCJC may use its information technology resources to examine logs for last login and use of WCJC systems.

L. If there is any indication of foul play, all appropriate law enforcement agencies will be immediately notified for assistance.

M. Records regarding missing residential student notifications will be maintained in the Office of the Vice President of Student Services.

V. GUIDELINES

A. Written notice of this regulation and specific guidelines are available to students in the Student Handbook and to employees in the Employee Handbook.