



## **Student Travel**

### **Purpose**

It is the policy of Stephen F. Austin State University to promote safe travel by students to and from certain events and activities covered by this policy.

### **Persons Affected**

This policy applies to all students, faculty, and staff.

### **Definitions**

**Appropriate Administrator:** Dean, department chair, or director of an administrative unit, or their delegate.

**Enrolled Student:** student who has been admitted to and is attending classes at the University.

**Organized Event:** Event that is initiated, planned, and arranged by a member of the University's faculty or staff, or by the members of a sponsored student organization, and is approved by an appropriate administrator.

**Sponsored Event or Activity:** Event or activity that the University endorses by supporting it financially, or by sending students to participate in it as official representatives of the University.

**Sponsored Student Organization:** organizations sponsored by a university department and designated as such by the Office of Student Engagement Programs.

### **Policy**

It is the policy of SFASU to promote the safe travel of students. Accordingly, travel to an organized or sponsored event or activity by a student(s) and located more than 25 miles from the SFASU campus from which the travel originated, must be approved and comply with the requirements of this policy. Examples of these types of activities and events covered by this policy include course related field trips, recreational sports club trips, departmental-sponsored trips, the activities of sponsored student organizations, university-funded student organization travel, class trips for educational or cultural enrichment, athletic, and meetings of academic organizations at which a student is officially representing the University. Examples of student travel this policy does not apply to include travel undertaken by a student not associated with the athletic team to attend an out-of-town athletic event, travel undertaken by a student to engage in class assignments, student-teaching, internships, practicums, observations, or research, and travel by a student organization and its members.

### **Procedures**

- A. **Prior Approval:** Each participant in student travel, as described above, must be approved



through the Travel Office in accordance with procedures established by that office. The appropriate administrator supervising student travel is responsible for ensuring that the travel obtains prior approval with Travel Office and informs those traveling of the travel rules and regulations.

**B. Safety and Mode of Travel**

**1. All Motor Vehicle Travel**

- a. **License and Training:** Each operator of a motor vehicle shall have a valid operator's license, be at least 18 years of age, and be trained as required by law to drive the vehicle that will be used. All drivers of eight and twelve passenger vans must be licensed, SFASU certified drivers with a van endorsement and be a minimum of 21 years of age. Exceptions to age limits for drivers may only be authorized by the Environmental Health, Safety and Risk Management Department.
- b. **Seat Belts:** Occupants of motor vehicles shall use seat belts or other approved safety restraint devices, required by law or regulation, at all times when the vehicle is in operation. The number of occupants in a vehicle cannot exceed the number of working seatbelts in the vehicle.
- c. **Alcohol, Tobacco Use, and Illegal Substances Prohibited:** Occupants of motor vehicles shall not consume, possess, or transport, any alcoholic beverages or illegal substances. Operators shall not drive while under the influence of drugs or alcohol; this includes over the counter or prescription medication that may impair the driver's ability. Occupants of motor vehicles shall not consume tobacco and vape products (including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipes, smokeless tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaporizers, vape pens, hookahs, blunts, pipes, snuff, and any other tobacco or vape related product), in compliance with SFASU Handbook of Operating Procedures.
- d. **Driver Safety:** Operators of motor vehicles shall comply with all laws, regulations, and posted signs regarding speed and traffic control. Operators shall not operate the vehicle for a continuous period that is longer than the maximum provided by federal or state law or regulations or guidelines promulgated by the university, whichever is lower, without scheduled rest stops or overnight stops. There are many factors that impact driver fatigue, all affecting drivers differently; but conditions such as hours without sleep, time of the day, road conditions, etc. should all be considered and monitored.
- e. **Passenger Capacity:** The total number of passengers in any vehicle at any time it is in operation shall not exceed the manufacturer's recommended capacity or the number specified in applicable federal or state law or regulations, whichever is lower. Consideration should be given to decreasing the number of passengers if luggage is to be transported in the same vehicle; luggage should be stored under seats or in the rear storage area and in a manner that does not obstruct the view of the driver.
- f. **Cargo and Luggage:** Cargo and/or luggage inside the van must be stacked no higher than the top of the van seats and should be placed forward of the rear axle. All cargo is prohibited on the roof. Cargo is defined as, but not limited to, boxes, bags, packs, equipment, etc.
- g. **Travel Using Rented Vehicles:** Operation of all rented vehicles shall comply, where applicable, with the State contracts for rental cars and all applicable requirements



of SFASU Handbook of Operating Procedures.

- h. Travel by Common Carrier: When a common carrier (bus, airline, etc.) is used for student travel covered by this policy, all reasonable steps will be taken to assure that the travel is undertaken in conformance with this policy and all applicable federal, state, local, and university regulations.
  - i. Travel by Personal Vehicle or Privately Leased Vehicle: While the university may not be made aware of trips undertaken by students using their private vehicles, or vehicles privately leased by them, the university will publish the requirements of this policy in publications used by registered student organizations at SFASU and will encourage their use in all travel undertaken by students for any trip governed by this policy. All drivers are encouraged to be appropriately licensed, and the owner of the vehicle(s) is encouraged to maintain appropriate vehicle insurance as required by law.
- C. Students are responsible for abiding by the rules and regulations contained in the SFASU Handbook of Operating Procedures while they are traveling. The sponsoring department can promulgate additional rules concerning expectations of students while on the trip.

### **Related Statutes or Regulations, Rules, Policies, or Standards**

Tex. Educ. Code § 51.950

Regents' *Rules and Regulations*, Rule 50601, Student Travel

### **Responsible Executive**

Vice President of Student Affairs

### **Forms**

Forms required by Travel Office

### **Revision History**

September 1, 2023 (original)