INTRODUCTION/MISSION

The Department of Purchasing provides this manual to all employees of the College in an effort to ensure that all the support services needed for them to accomplish their goals and objectives are met in a timely and professional manner. In this manual, we have attempted to answer most of the questions that an employee might have about purchasing. There are specific state and federal laws that apply.

The Purchasing Department is committed to providing excellent service to all faculty, employees and customers within the legal and logistical constraints that we face.

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT VALUES

Accountability  Ethics  Impartiality  Professionalism  Service  Transparency
PURCHASING

The Purchasing Office renders the service of procuring all materials, supplies, services and equipment required by the College. The specialized functions of Purchasing are centralized to promote efficiency in administration and management. In the tasks of developing specifications, handling deliveries, receiving and processing, Purchasing acts as a coordinator between the department and the vendor, and is expected to provide the needed materials and services in a timely manner and from a source most advantageous to the College.

Through the administrative structure of the College, the President has vested with the Director of Purchasing certain responsibility and authority for procurement of property, supplies and services. However, in the absence of the Purchasing Director, the Vice President for Business Services may act in his place.

No other employee of the College is permitted to order any materials, supplies, equipment, or services, on behalf of the College directly and on his/her own authority. If this is done, then the credit of the College is extended and this is against state statutes. No person may make any purchase involving the use of college funds unless authorized to do so, and then only through-established procedure. The payment of any unauthorized purchase shall be the sole responsibility of the person placing the order. If items are purchased without authorization, the Purchasing Department will notify the employee’s supervisor with an official letter and explanation of the violation. Willful violation of this policy will result in suspension of the purchasing privilege and/or the termination of employment.

Purchases of goods or services from businesses owned by or associated with college employees could violate the Mississippi Code of Ethics. Section 25-4-105 states “No public servant shall be a contractor, subcontractor or vendor with the governmental entity of which he is a member, officer, employee or agent, other than in his contract of employment, or have a material financial interest in any business which is a contractor, subcontractor or vendor with the governmental entity of which he is a member, officer, employee or agent.” If the employee is found in court to be in violation of this ethics law, the punishment includes monetary fines and/or possible jail time.

COMPETITIVE PRICING REQUIREMENTS

1. All purchases of $5,000 or less shall be made in accordance with good purchasing practices and in the College's best interest.

2. All purchases in excess of $5,000, but not more than $25,000, require that there be at least two (2) competitive written bids. Any bid item for construction in excess of Five Thousand Dollars ($5,000.00) shall be broken down by components to provide detail of component description and pricing. These details shall be submitted with the written bids and become part of the bid evaluation criteria.

3. All purchases over $25,000 require a formal sealed bid, unless permission is granted by the Purchasing Department, or a special exception applies. In addition, the District Board of Trustees, at a scheduled board meeting must approve bid awards.

4. The following are exceptions to competitive pricing policy:

   a. Purchasing agreements, contracts and maximum price regulations executed or approved by the Department of Finance and Administration. (State Contracts)

   b. Repairs to equipment, when such repairs are made by repair facilities in the private sector, however, engines, transmissions, rear axles and/or other such components shall not be included in this exemption when replaced as a complete unit instead of being repaired and the need for such total component replacement is known before disassembly of the component; provided, however, that invoices identifying the equipment, specific repairs made, parts identified by number and name, supplies used in such repairs, and
the number of hours of labor and costs therefore shall be required for the payment of such repairs.

c. Purchases of parts for repairs to equipment, when such repairs are made by personnel of the College; however, entire assemblies, such as engines or transmissions, shall not be included in this exemption when the entire assembly is being replaced instead of being repaired.

d. Motor vehicles or other equipment purchased from federal agency or authority, another governing authority or state agency of the State of Mississippi, or any governing authority or state agency of another state at a public auction held for the purpose of disposing of such vehicles or other equipment.

I. Any purchase by a governing authority under the exemption authorized by this subparagraph (v) shall require advance authorization spread upon the minutes of the governing authority to include the listing of the item or items authorized to be purchased and the maximum bid authorized to be paid for each item or items.

e. Perishable supplies or foods purchased for use in connection with hospitals, the school lunch programs, homemaking programs and for the feeding of county or municipal prisoners.

f. Purchases, sales, transfers or trades by governing authorities or state agencies when such purchases, sales, transfers, or trades are made by a private treaty agreement or through means of negotiation, from any federal agency or authority, another governing authority or state agency of the State of Mississippi, or any state agency or governing authority of another state. Nothing in this section shall permit such purchases through public auction except as provided for in subparagraph (v) of this section. It is the intent of this section to allow governmental entities to dispose of and/or purchase commodities from other governmental entities at a price that is agreed to by both parties. This shall allow for purchases and/or sales at prices, which may be determined to be below the market value if the selling entity determines that the sale at below market value is in the best interest of the taxpayers of the state. Governing authorities shall place the terms of the agreement and any justification on the minutes, and state agencies shall obtain approval from the Department of Finance and Administration, prior to releasing or taking possession of the commodities.

g. Noncompetitive items available from one (1) source only. In connection with the purchase of noncompetitive items only available from one (1) source, a certification of the conditions and circumstances requiring the purchase shall be filed by the agency with the Department of Finance and Administration and by the governing authority with the board of the governing authority. Upon receipt of that certification the Department of Finance and Administration or the board of the governing authority, as the case may be, may, in writing, authorize the purchase, which authority shall be noted on the minutes of the body at the next regular meeting thereafter. In those situations, a governing authority is not required to obtain the approval of the Department of Finance Administration.

h. Purchases of information technology products made by governing authorities under the provisions of purchase schedules, or contracts executed or approved by the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services and designated for use by governing authorities. (EPL: Express Product Lists)

i. Purchases by libraries or for libraries of books and periodicals; processed film, video cassette tapes, filmstrips and slides; recorded audio tapes, cassettes and diskettes; and any such items as would be used for teaching, research or other information distribution; however, equipment such as projectors, recorders, audio or video equipment, and monitor televisions are not exempt under this subparagraph.

j. Contracts by Mississippi Authority for Educational Television with any private educational institution or private nonprofit organization whose purposes are educational in regard to the construction, purchase, lease or lease-purchase of facilities and equipment and the employment of personnel for multi-channel interactive video systems (ITSF) in the school districts of this state.

k. Purchases made by state agencies or governing authorities involving any item that is manufactured,
processed, grown or produced from the state’s prison industries.

l. Purchases made by state agencies or governing authorities involving any item that is manufactured, processed or produced by the Mississippi Industries for the Blind.

m. Purchases of state-adopted textbooks by public school districts.

n. Purchases made by certified purchasing offices of state agencies or governing authorities under cooperative purchasing agreements previously approved by the Office of Purchasing and Travel and established by or for any municipality, county, parish or state government or the federal government; provided that the notification to potential contractors includes a clause that sets forth the availability of the cooperative purchasing agreement to other governmental entities. Such purchases shall only be made if the use of the cooperative purchasing agreements is determined to be in the best interest of the government entity.

PURCHASE OF NON-COMPETITIVE ITEMS AVAILABLE FROM ONE SOURCE

In connection with the purchase of noncompetitive items only available from one (1) source, the department must submit a sole source request form to the Purchasing Director. The department must document why the purchase is available from only one source and explain why neither comparative nor competitive quotations may be obtained. The form must be signed and approved by the Director of Purchasing before the transaction may take place. This non-competitive item, sole-source, form can be obtained by clicking on the forms link.

PURCHASE REQUISITIONS

Currently, we are using the electronic “Purchase Requisitions” via Colleague (the College’s district-wide administrative software system). This is to be used for all purchases made, including the warehouse, printing and duplicating departments. A paper requisition is available (forms link) to each department to assist in entering electronic requisitions and can be used at each department’s discretion.

PLANNING AND DETERMINING

A certain amount of time is required to process a requisition. Department chairpersons are responsible for determining their departmental needs for equipment, materials, and supplies and for conveying these needs to the District Purchasing Office, in sufficient detail, far enough in advance of the time the items will be needed to enable the College to observe the purchasing laws of the State of Mississippi.

For all purchases over $25,000, at least eight (8) weeks must be allowed from the time the District Purchasing Office is notified until a purchase order is issued following board approval. Generally, the District Board of Trustees meets the first Wednesday of each month.

All purchases in excess of $5,000, but no more than $25,000 require at least two (2) written bids/quotations. Allow two (2) weeks between requisition and purchase order.

All purchases of $5,000 or less will be made in accordance with generally established good purchasing practices. Only one quotation is required. This quotation is not required to accompany the requisition. Allow one (1) week between requisition and purchase order.

The department originating the requisition must also allow for the time the vendor may require for delivery. Some items can be delivered within one day after the purchase order is received; other items will require as much as sixty to ninety days or sometimes longer. If the department originating the requisition has not received the item within ninety days of the date of the purchase order, the department should notify the District Purchasing Office in writing of this problem. Purchasing will require the purchase order number and name of vendor to determine the problem and solution. To request a purchase order, electronically send a completed Purchase Requisition (Colleague mnemonic: REQM) approved by the department chairperson to the District Purchasing Office. For assistance of how to complete the REQM screen in Colleague contact the District Purchasing Office.
PREPARATION OF PURCHASE REQUISITIONS

1. Suggested Source
   The suggested vendor, if known, may be named. It should be noted that the purchase may not be made from the suggested source.

2. Ship To
   Indicate in the "Printed Comments Field" the location desired for the shipment and to whose attention the order should be delivered.

3. Order Section
   It is the responsibility of the department to give detailed specifications for each item requested and an exact price. The District Purchasing Office will be available to assist in writing specifications and will aid in supplying catalog information whenever possible.
   The details should list the catalog number, price, and general description. In the case of any oral quotations, the name of salesperson, and date of any quotation should be furnished. The originating department will obtain price quotations from two (2) or more vendors whenever possible. The vendor provided quote number should always be included on the requisition in the "Printed Comments" field.
   The writing of specifications pertaining to both quality and quantity is a joint responsibility of both the originating department and the District Purchasing Office. The share of the responsibility of each depends on the nature of the item being purchased. The Director of Purchasing will make the final decision as to the vendor, the quality and quantity, and kind of material requested.

4. Department Data
   Fill in the department data with the department number, G/L account number, the name of the department, and have the department chairperson sign the requisition.
   The form must be completed and have all required approvals before it is sent to the District Purchasing Office.

PURCHASE ORDERS

The purchase order will provide a method of issuing an order for merchandise or services to vendors both outside and inside the College. It is imperative that all purchases be controlled through purchase order numbers. A purchase order cannot be given to a vendor until the Director of Purchasing has signed it, or a purchasing representative has given the number over the telephone.

Purchase order numbers will not be given over the telephone except in cases in which the emergency purchase procedure has been followed, or at the discretion of the Director of Purchasing.

The purchase order will provide the following information:
1. The name of the department making the purchase.
2. Specifications for items ordered, including the quantity required.
3. Shipping instructions.
4. The price of the order and the terms agreed on.
5. Billing instructions.
6. Signature of the Director of Purchasing.

The purchase order provides the College with all the necessary input for encumbering funds and serves as a control to prevent overspending of budget.

The purchase order provides the receiving department with the necessary information for redelivery to the ordering department.
PAYMENT REQUIRED WITH ORDER AND/OR BEFORE INVOICE IS AVAILABLE

In certain instances, payments must accompany the order, e.g., conference registrations, firms which do not submit invoices for orders under a certain amount and require payment to accompany the order, and for other practical and expedient situations.

In such cases, you must indicate on the electronic Purchase Requisition (field: Printed Comments) that a check needs to accompany the order. Two copies of a letter or completed order form must be attached to the requisition showing description and price of items being ordered and a statement as to what address items should be shipped and to whom. The department originating the requisition must send these forms to the District Purchasing Office with the electronic requisitions number clearly indicated on the top of the forms.

BLANKET PURCHASE ORDER

When services or supplies are required with some degree of regularity, but the quantities are not easily determined, a blanket purchase order may be placed for a department to cover its requirements. Usually these purchase orders are issued by the District Purchasing Office for a period of one (1) month, but may be for a longer period of time not to exceed the current fiscal year in most cases...e.g., vehicle and plant maintenance supplies. **Items of equipment shall not be purchased on a blanket purchase order.**

The department will prepare an electronic requisition, specifying the vendor, the general classification of items to be purchased, the estimated total expenditures and the effective dates (Blanket PO for the period____ to____). The District Purchasing Office will encumber these dollars against the department's account number. If the department does not spend the total funds, the department's account will be credited with the unspent portion when the purchase order is closed.

EMERGENCY PURCHASES

An emergency may be defined as an unexpected occurrence, which affects health and safety of the college staff and students, and/or the normal day-to-day operation of the College and which requires immediate action. Examples of emergency requests are:

1. Replacement of burned-out motor or transformer, which operates central air conditioning unit.

2. Purchase of necessary part to repair broken water main.

3. When delays, due to the normal methods of processing a requisition would prove detrimental to the best interests of the College, the following procedure may be authorized:

4. All emergency requests must first be approved by either the President, or the Vice President for Business Services. Purchases which apparently do not meet the definition of an emergency will be verified with the appropriate cabinet member prior to purchase.

5. An electronic requisition should be completed and upon approval notify the District Purchasing Office of the requisition number. This requisition should be completed in the usual manner, except that the phrase "Emergency Request" should appear in the printed comments field.

6. After the department chairperson or designated representative receives the required approval and submits the necessary information, a purchase order will be issued. Once the purchase order number is determined, it is provided to the vendor or the requesting department. Immediate pick up or delivery will be arranged by the originating department after the purchase order number is provided to the vendor. The purchase order number must be provided to the vendor before delivery can be made.
7. The Emergency Purchase must receive approval by the College’s Board at the next scheduled meeting.

PRINTING FROM OUTSIDE VENDORS

1. All competitive pricing requirements will apply to printing obtained through outside vendors, except that any printing costing more than $25,000 will require sealed bids.
2. Printing that exceeds $5,000, but not more than $25,000, will require at least two (2) quotations. These will be obtained by the originating department, based on a set of written specifications that are the same for all vendors.
3. Printing that costs less than $5,000 will be purchased in accordance with good purchasing practices, and only one quotation is required. This quotation is not required to accompany the requisition.
4. All copy for printing and complete instructions must be included with the requisition.
5. An emergency printing request will be handled in accordance with the established emergency purchase procedure; however, the District Purchasing Office will not be responsible for printing errors resulting from emergency purchases.
6. Requisitions will specify that all printing, proofs and production materials will be picked up and delivered by the vendor unless other special arrangements are made.

PRINTING DEPARTMENT

Purchase orders are required for all printing. Open purchase orders may be used. The Printing Requisition and Job Order Form, is a one-part form that can be obtained from the printing office or department heads. The completed form should be delivered personally to the printing coordinator so that there is no miscommunication about the work to be printed.

DUPLICATING

Purchase orders are required for all duplicating requests. Open purchase orders may be used. The Duplicating Form, is a one-page form that can be obtained from the Duplicating Department or department heads. The completed form and work to be duplicated should be returned to the Duplicating Department for processing.

PRODUCTS RECEIVED ON A TRIAL BASIS

If a product is desired on a trial basis, a Purchase Requisition must be completed. The requisition should clearly state in the printed comments section that the item(s) is being ordered on a trial basis. Funds will be encumbered. If the product is to be kept, the ordering department must complete a Receiving Report via Colleague mnemonic PORC (PO Receiving Screen) or submit an approved original invoice to Accounts Payable. If the product is to be returned, only Purchasing is to be notified. The funds encumbered will then be released.

RETURN OF GOODS TO VENDOR

Occasionally, it will be necessary to return purchases to the vendor. This will be accomplished by the department chairperson returning the goods, along with a copy of all papers pertaining to the merchandise, to receiving and notifying Accounts Payable in writing that the goods have been returned to receiving and stating the reasons for the return.

COMPANIES THAT DO NOT ACCEPT PURCHASE ORDERS

If a company does not accept purchase orders and requires prepayment on an order, follow the procedure as outlined in “Payment Required with Order”.
TRADE-IN OF ACCOUNTABLE EQUIPMENT

Equipment to be traded must be indicated on the Purchase Requisition. Description, property decal number, and serial number (if available) must be given. The Director of Purchasing will determine whether it is more advantageous for the College to trade the equipment or place it in another department of the College. In the latter case, Purchasing will effect, between the two departments concerned, a monetary trade-in allowance comparable to the allowance offered by the vendor. Also see “Deletion of Equipment.”

If the old assets are not to be transferred to another college department, the Director of Purchasing will approve the trade with the vendor. In this situation, the asset will be retained in its present location until the new asset is delivered, at which time the property decal number on the traded asset will be removed and forwarded to the Inventory department.

PAYMENT AUTHORIZATION FOR A PURCHASE ORDER

Authorization for payment of a purchase order may be one of the following:

1. Receiving Report via Colleague mnemonic PORC (PO Receiving Screen)
2. Approved Original Invoice Received.

We require an original invoice with reference to the purchase order number. If the invoice is given to the person picking up the merchandise, please send this to Accounts Payable at the district office as soon as possible. If the original invoice is enclosed in the shipment, indicate “received,” date the invoice the date merchandise was received, sign the invoice for approval and send it to Accounts Payable for payment.

CHECK-ATTACHED / PRE-PAID PAYMENTS

Requests for payments of registration fees, membership dues, orders, etc., must be signed “Okay to Pay,” dated and signed when they are sent to the District Purchasing Office for the purchase order. No payment will be made without your approval. Failure to do this will delay your payments. You should always send two (2) copies of this document so that we can forward one along with the check, and have one to file in Accounts Payable as a part of our permanent record. Accounts Payable will also need a written statement from the vendor stating “pre-payment is required.”

FOOD PURCHASE FORM

A Food Purchase Form must be filled out and approved before a Purchase Order can be generated to purchase food. All food purchases must be for a legitimate business purpose. The only exception is when the food purchase is for students. The Food Purchase Form can be downloaded from the Intranet, under Business Services Forms.

SUMMARY OF PURCHASING POLICIES:

1. Properly approved requisitions for supplies and services are to be sent electronically to the District Purchasing Office on the Raymond Campus.
2. Contact with a salesperson and vendor(s), either by correspondence or in person, may be made by the various departments. **No commitment orders will be placed with salesperson until a purchase order is issued.** If you do so, you are personally responsible for the invoice.
3. If an order is incomplete, or if the merchandise is unsatisfactory, the department originating the requisition should contact the vendor and work out an agreeable solution. If unable to do so, contact the District Purchasing Office for assistance.
4. If invoices are received with the delivery of goods, these invoices should be sent to Accounts Payable in the Business Office immediately.

5. Actual amount purchased should not exceed the amount on the requisition.

6. If shipping is unknown, add 10% of your total order to allow for shipping charges.