

INSTITUTIONAL CODE OF ETHICS

Sequoias Community College District is composed of professionals who are dedicated to promoting a climate which enhances the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of each individual within the District community. Although we work in various settings and positions, we are committed to protecting human rights and pursuing academic excellence. While demanding for ourselves freedom of inquiry and communication, we accept the responsibility these freedoms require: competency; objectivity in the application of skills; concern for the best interest of students, colleagues, and the District community; and avoidance of conflicts of interest; and, the appearance of impropriety.

- A. Definition of Ethics: Ethical behavior is often defined as right or good behavior as measured against commonly accepted rules of conduct for a society or profession. The ethical person is often described as one who is fair, honest, straightforward, trustworthy, objective, moral, and unprejudiced. The consistent exercise of integrity is the cornerstone of ethical behavior.
- B. Rationale: The specifications of ethical standards enable us to clarify the nature of common ethical responsibilities, not only for present and future employees, but also for those we serve. ("Employees" refers to individuals hired and/or paid by the District, including members of the Board of Trustees, full- and part-time employees, and student employees.) As a means of supporting these commitments and responsibilities, District employees subscribe to the following standards of ethical and professional behavior.
- C. Limitations: The following is not an attempt to provide comprehensive guidelines regarding ethical issues in education; nor does it supersede more specific Board policies affecting ethical considerations. It is intended to provide general guidelines and expectations for the conduct of individuals at as we work toward maintaining ethical standards.
- D. General Responsibilities to the District Community: Recognizing their responsibility to the District, employees:
 1. Model ethically responsible behavior for students and colleagues and expect ethical behavior from others at all times. When the employee and the District encounter disagreements or conflicts concerning ethical behavior, personal values, performance or conduct, both the employee and the District have the responsibility directly and constructively to seek resolution of the conflicts. Possible actions include (a) confronting the individual in question, (b) utilizing institutional channels and procedures, and/or (c) using available

mechanisms of professional associations.

2. Have responsibilities to the District and to individuals they serve. Therefore, employees support the philosophy and mission of the District.
3. Address issues and work with people without prejudice and, therefore, do not discriminate unjustly against or in favor of any student or employee.
4. Avoid relationships that seek to meet an employee's personal needs at the expense of a student or a person under their supervision. They avoid conflicts of interest which may result from dual relationships, such as those of a sexual nature.
5. Recognize that personal problems and conflicts may interfere with employee effectiveness. Accordingly, employees monitor their personal and professional effectiveness and seek assistance when needed (e.g., psychological, medical, legal).
6. Ensure that accurate representation of District goals, services, programs, and policies are made to the public, students, and colleagues.
7. Avoid conflicts of interest between their contractual obligations to the District and private business or personal commitments (e.g., not soliciting clients or selling services or products during the course of their regular work at the District and refusing remuneration for services rendered to persons for whom they perform the same services as an employee of the District.
8. Avoid forcing personal values, beliefs, and behaviors on others.
9. Recognize that the shift to an information society gives employees access to increasing amounts of data, much of it automated. Employees exercise the privilege of using such data with care and integrity, and actively guard the privacy of individuals.
10. Engaged in research are knowledgeable and skilled in research techniques, use sound and defensible methodologies, conduct and report investigations in a manner that minimizes the possibility that results will be misleading, inaccurate, and/or deceptively incomplete.
11. Adhere to copyright law and established guidelines which seek an appropriate balance between the proprietary rights of copyright owners and the instructional needs of educational institutions.

E. Responsibility to the Profession: Recognizing a responsibility to their professions, employees:

1. Contribute to the development of their respective professions through sharing skills and ideas, serving professional organizations, and serving to mentors to emerging professionals.
2. Maintain and enhance individual professional effectiveness and competence through continuing education to improve skills and acquire new knowledge, and they assure the same opportunity for persons under their supervision.
3. Accurately represent their experience and credentials, competencies and limitations to all concerned, and are responsible for correcting any misrepresentations of their qualifications by others.

F. Responsibility to Colleagues: In the interest of maintaining effective working relationships with colleagues and promoting an environment of collegiality, employees:

1. Facilitate a climate of trust and mutual support through relationships focused on respect for reason, freedom of expression, and the right to dissent.
2. Avoid disclosing information about colleagues obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.
3. Avoid knowingly making false or malicious statements about colleagues.
4. Treat those they may supervise (in their supervisory, managerial and/or administrative roles) with respect and integrity; value the well-being of employees as they make decisions about the needs of the District; and, use the power inherent in their positions wisely and with serious regard for individual worth and personal and professional growth.
5. Foster openness by encouraging and maintaining two-way communication, characterized by honesty and integrity.

G. Responsibility to the Student: In fulfillment of their obligation to the student, employees:

1. Promote freedom of inquiry and expression in the pursuit of learning.
2. Ensure that the student has access to varying points of view.
3. Avoid intentionally suppressing or distorting subject matter relevant to the student's progress.
4. Make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.
5. Avoid intentionally embarrassing or disparaging the student.
6. Avoid disclosing information about students obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.
7. Are sensitive to ethics issues in measurement and evaluation both in and out of the classroom.

References: Accreditation Standard III.A.1.d.; Ethical standards from: American College Personnel Association, American Association of University Professors, Association of California Community College Administrators National Education Association, American Association for Counseling and Development, and American Psychological Association.

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