

Board Policy 2715

Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice

The Board maintains high standards of ethical conduct for its members. Members of the Board are responsible for the following Code of Ethics:

As a Board member, I am a member of a select group of people chosen by the citizens of the El Camino Community College District to perform a vital service. I have been granted a position of “trusteeship” over the District. I have an obligation to fulfill this trust to the best of my ability. To become a capable and successful Board member, I must be willing to devote the necessary hours to serve as trustee, attend Board meetings, college functions, conferences and workshops and to study thoroughly the issues and problems demanding decisions.

To this end, I pledge my best efforts under this Code of Ethics:

1. Trustees will confine Board action to policy determination, to assuring fiscal stability of the District, and to delegating authority to the Superintendent/President as the Board executive.

Knowing that under all circumstances, the Board of Trustees is legally responsible for effective operation of the District, trustees will use appropriate channels to conduct all college business. Although district employees, students and community residents may freely express their views to Board members, trustees will use discretion in involving themselves or in taking action in matters they have placed under the authority of the chief executive officer.

2. Trustees will oversee spending public funds appropriately, prudently and legally, including those relating to their own expenses.

Trustees will base their decisions on all information available to them in each situation. They will exercise special care to assure that their own expenses are authorized, legitimate, reasonable and directly related to their trusteeship.

3. Trustees will observe appropriate conduct at Board meetings to facilitate decision-making that reflects the best interests of the College and the community.

Trustees will take action only in public sessions. They will maintain confidentiality of privileged information. They will assure an atmosphere in which controversial issues may be presented fairly and one in which the dignity of each individual is maintained.

4. Trustees will encourage and welcome active involvement of students, employees and residents of the District.

Trustees will listen to their constituency with respect to establishing policy on College operation along with proposed developments and will consider their views when making deliberations and decisions.

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5. Trustees will avoid any conflict of interest and will always act in a professional manner.

Trustees will not intentionally use their position for personal gain or personal prestige. They will fulfill their responsibilities without regard to prejudice, provinciality, partisanship or animosity, thereby bringing credit to the College through conduct in business, social, professional and personal relationships.

6. Trustees will abide by majority decisions of the Board, while retaining the right to seek changes in decisions through ethical and constructive channels. Trustees recognize that a single Board member has no legal authority as an individual and that decisions may be made only by a majority vote. Therefore, members will work together to maintain a spirit of cooperation and respect at all times regardless of differences of opinion and individual trustee decisions.

7. Trustees who violate the Board's code of ethics harm the Board and District. The Board will be prepared to investigate the factual basis behind any legitimate charge or complaint of Trustee misconduct. Charges by any person that a Trustee has violated laws and regulations governing Board behavior or the Board's Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice shall be directed to the Board President or the Board of Trustees itself.

If deemed appropriate, the Board President shall establish an ad hoc committee to examine the charges and recommend further courses of action to the Board.

If a violation is determined to warrant disciplinary action, any of the following may be considered depending upon whether it is a first, second or subsequent occurrence and the severity of the issue.

- A. Discussion with the Board President, or if the Trustee in question is the Board President, by the Board Vice President or next ranking Board officer.
- B. To the extent the member's conduct has exposed the Board or the District to potential legal action, the Board President may arrange a confidential meeting between the Board President, the member and the District counsel to further discuss the issue.

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- C. Letter of Reprimand from the Board President, or if the Trustee in question is the Board President, by the Board Vice President or next ranking Board officer.
- D. As deemed advisable, the Board shall schedule additional workshops or retreats on codes of ethics and the importance of upholding them.
- E. As a final step, if all other steps have been unsuccessful, the Board may consider a Resolution of Censure.

Censure is an official expression of disapproval adopted by the Board of Trustees. A Board member may be subject to a Resolution of Censure by the Board of Trustees should it be determined that a serious violation of Trustee misconduct has occurred.

In the event that the alleged violation constitutes a violation of the laws of the State of California, the Board should consider whether to refer the violation to the Los Angeles County District Attorney or the Attorney General of California.

Reference:

ACCJC Accreditation Standard IV.C.11 (formerly IV.B.1.a, e, & h)

El Camino College

Adopted: 4/16/01

Amended: 7/20/09, 7/16/18