

A. Preamble

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

B. 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.

C. Rationale

The specifications of ethical standards enable the district to clarify the nature of common ethical responsibilities not only for present and future employees, but also for students. As a means of supporting these commitments and responsibilities, members of the El Camino College Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and classified staff subscribe to the following standards of ethical and professional behavior. For purposes of this policy "employees" refers to individuals approved, hired and/or paid by the district, including members of the Board of Trustees, full and part-time employees, student employees, and volunteers.

D. Limitations

The following policy is not an attempt to provide comprehensive guidelines regarding ethical issues in education. Nor does it supersede more specific federal or state laws, board policies, administrative procedures, or collective bargaining or other contracts affecting ethical considerations. It is intended to provide general guidelines and expectations for the conduct of individuals at El Camino College as they work toward maintaining ethical standards. Employees are also guided by ethical standards established by professional organizations in their fields.

E. General Responsibilities to the College Community

Recognizing their responsibility to El Camino College, employees will:

1. Model ethically responsible behavior for students and colleagues and expect ethical behavior from others at all times. When the employee and the college encounter disagreements or conflicts concerning ethical behavior, personal values, performance or conduct, both the employee and the college have the responsibility directly and constructively to seek resolution of the conflicts.
2. Have responsibilities to the institution and to individuals they serve. Therefore, employees support the values and the mission of the College.
3. Address issues and work with people without prejudice and therefore refrain from discriminating unjustly against or in favor of any student, employee, or visitor.
4. Avoid inappropriate personal relationships with parties under their supervision or authority.
5. Accurately represent college goals, services, programs, and policies.
6. Strive to minimize conflicts of interest between their contractual obligations to the district and private business or personal commitments.
7. Avoid forcing personal values, beliefs, and behaviors on others.
8. Recognize that the shift to an information society gives them access to increasing amounts of data, much of it automated; exercise the privilege of using such data with care and integrity, and actively guard the privacy of individuals.
9. Use sound and defensible methodology when engaged in research. Conduct and report investigations in a manner that minimizes the possibility that results will be misleading, inaccurate, and/or deceptive.
10. Accurately represent their experience and credentials, competencies, and limitations to all concerned.

F. Responsibilities to Colleagues

In the interest of maintaining effective working relationships with their colleagues and promoting an environment of collegiality, employees will:

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 intentionally disclosing confidential 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. Make a reasonable effort to protect colleagues from conditions harmful to health and safety.
5. In supervisory, management and administrative roles, treat those they supervise with respect and integrity and value the well-being of employees as they make decisions about the needs of the institution. Employees will use the power inherent in their positions wisely and with serious regard for individual worth and personal and professional growth.
6. Foster openness by encouraging and maintaining two-way communication, characterized by honesty and integrity.

G. Responsibility to Students

In fulfillment of their obligation to students, employees will:

1. Promote freedom of inquiry and expression in the pursuit of learning.
2. Avoid intentionally suppressing or distorting subject matter relevant to students' progress.
3. Foster a culture where students have access to accurate and diverse points of view.
4. Make a reasonable effort to protect students from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.
5. Avoid intentionally disparaging students.

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 and in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
7. Strive to be sensitive to issues of diversity at the college.

H. Consequences of Violations

Conduct that is alleged to have been in direct violation of this procedure may be subject to further investigation. For faculty, classified staff and police officers, if such a process finds the allegation to be credible, the supervisor of that employee may invoke disciplinary measures outlined in the current, respective collective bargaining agreement should the other requirements of the agreement be met. For other district employees, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with applicable regulations, board policies, administrative procedures and collective bargaining agreements.

References:

ACCJC Accreditation Standard III.A.13
American Association of University Professors
American College Personnel Association
Association of California Community College Administrators
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
National Education Association
Board Policy 2715, Code of Ethics

El Camino College
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