

The superintendent/president shall ensure that a professional code of ethics specifying the responsibilities of all employees to their colleagues, their profession, and all students shall be formulated, reviewed at least annually and published in consultation with faculty members, classified staff members, administrators, students, and the Board of Trustees.

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A. Preamble

MiraCosta 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 MiraCosta 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 hired and/or paid by the district, including members of the Board of Trustees, full and part-time employees, and student employees.

D. Limitations

The following policy 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 MiraCosta College as they work toward maintaining ethical standards. Employees are also guided by ethical standards established by professional organizations in their fields, for example:

MiraCosta Community College District**Page 1 of 4**

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The American Association of University Professors, American College Personnel Association, Association of California Community College Administrators, and so on.

E. General Responsibilities to the College Community

Recognizing their responsibility to MiraCosta College, employees:

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. Possible actions include (a) confronting the individual in question, (b) utilizing institutional channels and procedures, such as the district grievance procedure, and/or (c) using available mechanisms of professional associations.
2. Have responsibilities to the institution and to individuals they serve. Therefore, employees support the philosophy and the mission of the college.
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 employee personal needs at the expense of a student or a person under their supervision. They avoid conflicts of interest that 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 college goals, services, programs, and policies is 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. For example, they avoid soliciting clients and selling services or products during the course of their regular work at MiraCosta College and they refuse remuneration for services rendered to persons for whom they perform the same services as an employee of the college.
8. Avoid forcing personal values, beliefs, and behaviors on others.
9. Recognize that the shift to an information society gives them access to increasing amounts of data, much of it automated. They exercise the privilege of using such data with care and integrity, and actively guard the privacy of individuals.
10. Use sound and defensible methodology when engaged in research and are knowledgeable and skilled in research technique. They 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 that seek an appropriate balance between the property rights of copyright owners and the instructional needs of educational institutions.

F. 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 as 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.

G. Responsibilities to Colleagues

In the interest of maintaining effective working relationships with their 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. 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. They 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.

H. 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. Avoid intentionally suppressing or distorting subject matter relevant to the student's progress.

3. Ensure that the student has access to varying points of view.
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 and including but not limited to these factors: (a) orientation of students to the purposes and results of testing; (b) insurance against risks of stereotyping due to possible instrument limitations with regard to socioeconomic, ethnic and cultural factors; (c) the insurance of adequate qualification of employees responsible for the administration, scoring, and interpretation of instruments; (d) maintenance of test security; (e) insurance against risk of over-reliance on test data and over-interpretation of results. (Employees are referred to the sources listed for further guidance on ethical issues and technical information relating to measurement and evaluation.)

I. Consequences of Violations

Conduct that is determined to be in direct violation of this procedure will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with applicable regulations, board policies, administrative procedures, working condition manuals, and collective bargaining agreements.

J. References

Each of the following professional organizations has developed ethical standards from which this Code of Ethics has been drawn. Copies of the codes of ethics of the below listed organizations have been placed in the Learning Resources Center. This is not an exhaustive list of organizations that have developed ethical standards; employees are urged to refer to their own professional organizations for additional codes of ethics.

1. ACPA – American College Personnel Association
2. AAUP – American Association of University Professors
3. ACCCA – Association of California Community College Administrators
4. NEA – National Education Association
5. AACD – American Association for Counseling and Development
6. APA – American Psychological Association