



## **BP 2715**

## **CODE OF ETHICS/STANDARDS OF PRACTICE**

### **References:**

ACCJC Accreditation Standard IV.C.11

### **Standards of Conduct**

To maximize Board effectiveness and institutional and public confidence in District governance, individual Board members are expected to govern responsibly and hold themselves to the highest standards of ethical conduct. The Board expects its members to work collegially with each other and the Superintendent/President to ensure that decisions are made which are in the best interest of students and the District.

Each member of the Board of Trustees will:

- **Act in a manner that reflects the values of the institution by:**
  - holding the educational welfare of the students of the District as his/her primary concern.
  - insofar as possible, showing concern and interest for student accomplishments by attending student ceremonies and events.
  - supporting and promoting institutional improvement and innovation consistent with the District mission and Board duties and responsibilities.
  - ensuring an atmosphere in which controversial issues can be presented fairly and in which the dignity of each individual is maintained.
  - upholding, implementing, and enforcing all laws and codes applying to the District.
  
- **Demonstrate effective leadership by:**
  - personally complying with all of his/her duties and responsibilities under BP 2200 titled Board Duties and Responsibilities and conducting himself/herself in accordance with these standards of conduct.
  - respecting the office of Trustee and in no way misusing the power inherent in the office.
  - being respectful of members of the public, faculty, staff, students, and all others who comment or present information at Board meetings.
  - acting with civility and dignity and understanding the implications of demeanor and behavior.



- being an advocate for the District in the community by encouraging support for and interest in the College.
  - being informed about, advancing, and promoting the interest of the community as a whole and the public at large and exercising independent judgment without bias in favor of private interests or partisan political groups.
  - recognizing and actively communicating to others that authority rests with the Board as a whole in its legally constituted meetings and Board or District decisions are not made by individual Board members or committees.
  - proposing policy considerations or other agenda items for discussion using established Board procedures including BP 2340 titled Agendas.
  - attending and participating in all meetings, insofar as possible, having prepared for discussion and decision by reviewing all agenda materials.
  - being informed about issues before the Board and matters to be decided by the Board before voting on a decision.
  - conducting all business of the Board in compliance with law regarding open public meetings, unless, for purposes permitted by law, it is deemed necessary to hold a closed session.
  - maintaining confidentiality of Board discussions held in closed sessions of the Board in accordance with law and maintaining confidentiality of privileged information.
  - avoiding any situation that may constitute a conflict of interest and informing the Board or the Board President when a matter under consideration might involve or appear to involve such a conflict.
  - abstaining from participation in discussion and voting on any issue where a conflict of interest exists.
  - enhancing his/her effectiveness as a Trustee through study of contemporary educational issues, by such means as staying current on relevant publications and attending conferences designed to improve Board member effectiveness.
- **Promote and maintain good relations with other Board members by:**
    - keeping an open mind and listening to other ideas and points of view.
    - respecting the opinions of others and abiding by majority rule.
    - working with other Board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation and giving courteous consideration to others' opinions.
    - refraining from lengthy repetitive commentaries during Board meetings.



- recognizing when a matter has been adequately considered by the entire Board and refraining from repeatedly revisiting an issue or matter that is a personal interest or concern not shared by the Board as a whole.
- refraining from personal criticism of other Board members in meetings or other public communications. This does not apply to reasoned philosophical or factual disagreements.
- **Promote a healthy professional relationship with the Superintendent/President, faculty, and staff by:**
  - appointing an effective Superintendent/President and supporting his/her effective administration and leadership of the college consistent with Board policies, accreditation standards, and legal requirements.
  - understanding the distinction between Board and staff roles, and refraining from directing or performing management or educational functions that are the appropriate responsibility of the Superintendent/President, faculty, or staff.
  - supporting District personnel in the effective and appropriate performance of their duties and assuring that they have the needed responsibility, authority and, within fiscal limitations, resources to perform effectively.
  - maintaining open and respectful communication and asking reasonable questions when necessary or appropriate to understand the recommendations or issues before the Board.
  - using appropriate channels of communication.
  - referring complaints, criticisms, and grievances through appropriate channels as previously agreed upon and reflected in Board policies.

The Board recognizes the rights of individual Board members to freely express their views and encourages open, informed and thorough discussion of issues before the Board. The Board believes that effective Board members have a responsibility to respectfully express themselves during discussions before Board decisions, whether in agreement or disagreement with the Board majority, in ways that promote the Board's ability to govern the District. However, once the Board has reached a decision on a matter, then the Board acts as a whole and it is the responsibility of every Board member to accept and support the decision that the Board as a whole has reached.

When speaking to community groups, the media, or other members of the public, or when communicating to the public in other ways such as in internet blogs or comments, individual Board members should recognize that their statements may be perceived as



reflecting the views and positions of the Board as a whole. Therefore Board members have a responsibility to identify personal viewpoints as such and not as the viewpoint of the Board and to support the decisions of the Board as a whole.

**Violation of the Board's Code of Ethics/Standards of Conduct and/or Board Policies**

The Board of Trustees will promptly address any violation by a member or members of the Board of its Code of Ethics/Standards of Conduct and/or Board Policies which are the responsibility of individual members, including, but not limited to, BP 2710 titled Conflict of Interest, BP 2715 titled Code of Ethics, BP 2716 titled Political Activity, and BP 2717 titled Personal Use of Public Resources.

Such violation(s) will be addressed by the Board President, who will first discuss the violation(s) with the Board member in an effort to seek to reach a resolution. If resolution is not achieved and further action is deemed necessary by the Board President, the Board President may appoint an ad hoc committee composed of up to three Board members to examine the matter and recommend further courses of action to the Board.

Sanctions will be determined by a majority vote of the entire Board and may include a recommendation to the Board to censure the Board member by a resolution. All sanctions will be in accordance with state and federal laws and education codes.

If the President of the Board is perceived to have violated the Board's Code of Ethics/Standards of Conduct and/or Board Policies that are their responsibility, the Vice President of the Board is authorized to pursue resolution.

Motions calling for the adoption of a censure resolution may only be brought at the Board's regularly scheduled meetings, or at a special meeting. Censure resolutions shall only be heard in public. Notice of a censure resolution shall be given no later than at the time the meeting is noticed. A censure resolution shall describe in sufficient detail the conduct of said Board member or members, so as to allow the member or members to prepare his/her response to the allegations before the vote.

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Legal Reference Update #25: November 2014

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