

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 for a profession. The ethical person is often described in absolute terms as one who is fair, honest, straightforward, trustworthy, dispassionate, and unprejudiced. If, however, one is inconsistently fair or honest, one loses credibility and is perceived to be unethical. The ethical person must be conspicuously consistent in the exercise of integrity to sustain the credibility that is an expectation of office.

The Importance of Ethics

The credibility of college administrators depends upon whether they are perceived as honest. If integrity contributes to credibility, then ethical behavior is a singular prerequisite to being a successful manager and leader. When people are convinced that public institutions are administered and led by honest individuals, questions of credibility and demands for public accountability is less likely to arise.

Statements of ethical standards do not necessarily ensure ethical behavior. Yet public statements of intent surely create an expectation that public officials will intentionally act with integrity in the public interest.

Expectations for Ethical Behavior

Administrators of community colleges shall be committed to the principles of honesty, transparency, and equity. They shall not seek to abridge for any purpose the freedoms of faculty, classified professionals, and students. At the same time, they shall not willingly permit the rights and privileges of any members of the college community to override the best interests of the public served by the college.

As entrusted managers of the college community, administrators shall exercise judgments that are virtuous, fair, consistent, and equitable. They shall exhibit openness and reliability in what they say and do as leaders. They shall confront issues and people without prejudice and implicit bias. They shall do everything they can to demonstrate a commitment to excellence in education and without compromise to the principles of ethical behavior.

ACCCA's Statement of Ethics is directly connected to its [Equity Statement](#). In order to act ethically, managers and administrators of the college community, including members within our organization, must understand, be mindful and constantly work towards equity in the field. Please see the ACCCA [Equity Statement](#) for further details.

The consistent exercise of integrity is ethical behavior.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ADMINISTRATORS

Administrators must respond to many constituencies: to elected or appointed governing boards; to colleague administrators, faculty and staff; to their professions; and to the students and the community. The following statements of responsibilities are intended as guidelines:

- I. **With respect to students, the community college administrator has the responsibility:**

- a. To provide, protect, and increase student access to the educational resources of the community college
 - b. To protect human dignity and individual freedom, and assure that students are respected as individuals, as learners, and as independent decision-makers.
 - c. To invite students to participate in the established shared governance process.
 - d. To protect students from disparagement, embarrassment or capricious judgment.
 - e. To keep foremost in mind at all times that the college exists to serve its students.
- II. **With respect to colleagues and staff, the community college administrator has the responsibility:**
- a. To develop a climate of trust and mutual support through the established shared governance processes.
 - b. To foster openness by encouraging and maintaining two-way communication.
 - c. To encourage, support and abide by written policies and procedures and to communicate clearly to all staff members the conditions of employment, work expectations and evaluation procedures.
 - d. To provide opportunities for professional growth and development.
 - e. To provide due process with opportunity for appeal and review of employee evaluation.
 - f. To challenge unethical behavior in a timely manner.
- III. **With respect to the governing board, the community college administrator has the responsibility:**
- a. To keep the board informed so that it can act in the best interests of the district and the public.
 - b. To act in the best interest of the district.
 - c. To be guided by the principles and policies established by the board.
 - d. To represent the board in official statements only when formally designated to do so.
- IV. **With respect to the profession, the community college administrator has the responsibility:**
- a. To improve performance through participation in professional activities.
 - b. To be informed about developments in education in general, and in the community colleges in particular.
 - c. To encourage and assist new professionals toward growth and effectiveness.
- V. **With respect to the community, the community college administrator has the responsibility:**
- a. To remain continuously informed of the characteristics, preferences and educational needs of the local community.
 - b. To be sensitive to individuals from diverse backgrounds and with diverse perspectives.
 - c. To encourage and stimulate communications with community groups.

RIGHTS AND DUE PROCESS

A community college administrator should have the right:

- A. To be considered for employment without regard to race, sex, religion, creed, age, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation.
- B. To a clear written statement of the philosophy, goals and objectives of the district.
- C. To a written contract identifying terms and conditions of employment.
- D. To work in a setting of institutional support and a climate of professional respect.
- E. To be assigned authority commensurate with responsibilities and resources adequate to carry out assigned functions.
- F. To act independently within the scope of authority to carry out responsibilities assigned.
- G. To perform duties and carry out responsibilities without disruption or harassment.
- H. To be provided with legal and financial protection from liability in carrying out duties of the position.
- I. To participate in formulating and implementing institutional policy at a level appropriate for the position held.
- J. To speak for the institution at the level of assigned authority.
- K. To participate in professional associations.
- L. To confidentiality regarding personal matters.
- M. To participate in, and to be supported at an appropriate level in activities providing for professional growth such as career advancement and promotion, sabbatical leaves, other leaves, and conference attendance.
- N. To consistent support from supervisors for the proper performance of work assigned.
- O. To be evaluated in a professional manner on a regular and systemic basis, and to receive adequate notice of dissatisfaction with performance or action to terminate in accordance with existing statues.
- P. To due process in accordance with written procedures which are communicated to the administrator prior to appointment.