

FACULTY ETHICS POLICY

I. Policy Section
7.0 Instructional

II. Policy Subsection

7.12—Faculty Ethics

III. Policy Statement

Established codes of ethics serve several different functions that contribute significantly to their professional and institutional value. Examining these functions individually clarifies the importance of developing and maintaining a vital code of professional ethics within an institution: The first function served is *aspirational* - these codes outline the core values we aspire to and strive to manifest in our professional conduct. Secondly, professional ethics codes are *educational* - with these codes we educate others in our profession and institution about the values, beliefs and behaviors that we have decided are central to ethical conduct. Finally, professional ethics codes function in a manner that is *self-regulatory* – these codes serve as proof that the faculty at GRCC agree to a set of minimally acceptable standards, and to give fair notice that departures from these standards undermine the mission of the College. Peer differences that may benefit from the assistance of a third party may be brought for review to a Faculty Ethics Committee*, a committee composed only of other faculty members, who may implement a review process.

IV. Reason for the Policy

This Faculty Code of Ethics as endorsed by the Academic Governing Council of Grand Rapids Community College is based in part on the standards set forth in a guiding document prepared by the American Association of University Professors¹. It clarifies standards of professional conduct derived from general professional consensus about the existence of certain principles considered basic to acceptable faculty behavior. These principles are viewed by faculty as consistent with the mission of the College, and with the highest standards of professional conduct. This Faculty Code of Ethics also incorporates a previously developed articulation of professional standards of faculty conduct developed by the GRCC Faculty Association².

By adopting this Code, the faculty of Grand Rapids Community College attests its responsibility to protect academic freedom, to help preserve the highest standards of teaching and scholarship, and to advance the mission of the College as an institution of higher learning. This Code underscores our responsibilities to

¹ American Association of University Professors Statement on Professional Ethics. June, 1987.

² Faculty Association Code of Ethics found in the Materials and Methods section of the GRCC Policies and Procedures Manual.

our students, our colleagues, our individual disciplines, this institution, and the broader community at large.

V. Entities Affected by this Policy

GRCC Faculty members

VI. Who Should Read this Policy

All GRCC Faculty Members
Academic Administration

VII. Related Documents

- a). American Association of University Professors Statement on Professional Ethics. June, 1987
- b). Academic Governing Council Faculty Ethics Decision Paper
- c). Equal Employment Opportunity Statement

VIII. Contacts

Academic Governing Council Executive Committee

IX. Definitions

X. Procedures

Principle 1: Faculty Members as Scholars

Faculty members, guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge, recognize the special responsibilities placed upon them. Their primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and to state the truth as they see it. To this end faculty members devote their energies to developing and improving their scholarly competence. They accept the obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge. They practice intellectual honesty. Although faculty members may follow subsidiary interests, these interests must never seriously hamper or compromise their freedom of inquiry.

As examples of conduct supporting this construct, in fulfilling their obligations faculty members should consider the following:

- Maintain awareness of contemporary development within their areas of expertise.
- Present subject matter in such a manner that it is free of deliberate misrepresentation.

- Use only those academic degrees and associated titles conferred by regionally accredited academic institutions.

Principle 2: Faculty Members as Teachers

As teachers, faculty members encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Faculty members demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and mentors. Faculty members make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between faculty member and student. Faculty members refrain from any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from others and protect their academic freedom.

As examples of conduct supporting this construct, in fulfilling their obligations faculty members should consider the following:

- Make all reasonable efforts to meet classes as scheduled, maintain office hours, respond to communication in a timely manner and provide reasonable means for student access to course information.
- State course outcomes clearly at the beginning of the course and state the criteria and procedures for evaluating student attainment of these objectives.
- Provide appraisal of student progress and opportunities for students to discuss their academic work and means whereby they may improve their performance.
- Promote an intellectually stimulating atmosphere in the classroom which is conducive to the attainment of high academic achievement and stated course outcomes.
- Encourage the free pursuit of learning, independence of thought, and freedom of discussion in the classroom, while respecting the individuality of each student.
- Honor FERPA laws regarding the disclosure of student information obtained in the course of professional service, and adhere to the spirit of the ADA and Title IX laws and policies.
- Refrain from using professional relationships with students for private advantage.
- Provide an atmosphere of encouragement avoiding embarrassment or disparagement of students.
- Respect and defend the principle and practice of academic freedom.

- Carefully consider student complaints about a colleague, always seeking to benefit both student and faculty member by responding appropriately.
- Recognize that a faculty member, due to his/her position of authority, should not enter into a sexual relationship with a student while engaged in a professional relationship with that student.

Principle 3: Faculty Members as Colleagues

As colleagues, faculty members have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. Faculty members do not discriminate against or harass colleagues. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates. In the exchange of criticism and ideas faculty members show due respect for the opinions of others, and strive to be objective in their professional judgment of colleagues. Faculty members accept their share of faculty responsibilities for the governance of their institution.

As examples of conduct supporting this construct, in fulfilling their obligations faculty members should consider the following:

- *Respect the individuality of each faculty member based on, and in accordance with, the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy Statement.*
- Cooperate and contribute to their fair share of department, committee and professional work.
- Be a positive force in their department, strengthening relationships among their colleagues and maintaining high academic standards.
- Encourage awareness of and participation in the non-classroom activities within the Institution.

Principle 4: Faculty Members and the College

As members of an academic institution, faculty members seek above all to be effective teachers and scholars. Although faculty members observe the stated regulations of the institution, provided the regulations do not contravene academic freedom, they maintain their right to criticize and seek revision. Faculty members give due regard to their paramount responsibilities within their institution in determining the amount and character of work done outside it. When considering the interruption or termination of their service, faculty members recognize the impact of their decision upon the program of the institution and give due notice of their intentions.

As examples of conduct supporting this construct, in fulfilling their obligations faculty members should consider the following:

- Observe the stated regulations, general philosophy and objectives of this institution, always maintaining the right to criticize and seek revision.
- Recognize, when determining the number of community or other outside activities that their paramount responsibilities are within the institution.

- Consider carefully accepting offered gratuities, gifts or favors that might impair one's professional judgment or discredit the College.

Principle 5: Faculty Members and the Community at Large

As members of their community, faculty members have the rights and obligations of other citizens. Faculty members measure the urgency of these obligations in light of their responsibilities to their subject, to their students, to their profession, and to their institution. When they speak or act as private persons, they avoid creating the impression of speaking or acting for the College. As citizens engaged in a profession that depends upon freedom for its health and integrity, faculty members have a particular obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public understanding of academic freedom.

As examples of conduct supporting this construct, in fulfilling their obligations faculty members should consider the following:

- Distinguish clearly between personal views, professional opinions, and those of the College.
- Refrain from knowingly distorting or misrepresenting facts concerning educational or institutional matters.
- Use of social media in the name of Grand Rapids Community College must comply with all applicable college policies, guidelines, and regulations, including but not limited to the Acceptable Use Agreement.

XI. Forms

N/A

XII. Effective Date

- November 11, 2008 as ratified by the Academic Governing Council

XIII. Policy History

- Replaces 7.3 Instructional materials and Methods—Faculty Association Code of Ethics (pg. 3c-3e), 1991
- Provost Approval: November 21, 2008
- Presidential Approval: June 22, 2009
- AGC Reviewed: Winter 2013
- AGC Review/Revised and Approved: October 10, 2017

XIV. Next Review/Revision Date

- The review process shall be reached by mutual agreement of the AGC Faculty Ethics Committee and the Faculty Association.
- Committee Effective: Upon agreement of scope, purpose, and membership of committee between Provost and Faculty Association.
- Other aspects of the policy are effective immediately.
- Review again in 2021-2022