

# PIERCE COLLEGE FACULTY CODE OF ETHICS

Adopted by the Senate May 14, 1990  
Revised by the Senate December 4, 1995  
Revised by the Senate March 19, 2001

While there are many definitions of what it means to be a professional, common to them all is the belief that a professional is a member of a self-regulating body. To this end, the Senate of the Pierce College Faculty has adopted the following Code of Ethics with operational guidelines.

This code has been modelled after that adopted by the American Association of University Professors, but differs significantly from that code in that it specifically addresses the special obligations of Community College faculty.

This code is adopted with the hope that professionalism will be enhanced by making our values explicit and insisting on a campus culture that promotes and protects these values.

## **Section I. We acknowledge our responsibility to seek and state the truth:**

- A. We recognize our obligation to develop and maintain scholarly competence.
- B. We acknowledge our responsibility to defend the right of free inquiry, and to respect the judgment, style, and point of view of others, even though they may not coincide with our own.
- C. We accept the obligation to practice intellectual honesty.

## **Section II. Faculty encourage the free pursuit of learning by acknowledging our obligations:**

- A. To respect students as individuals.
- B. To serve as intellectual guide and advisor.
- C. To foster honest academic conduct.
- D. To ensure that evaluation reflects the student's true academic merit, and NOT personality, race, religion, political activism, personal beliefs, or other non-academic criteria.
- E. To respect the confidential nature of the faculty/student relationship.
- F. To always treat students as ends in themselves, and never as means to our own ends.
- G. To create a learning environment of trust and sensitivity.
- H. To protect and advance academic freedom of students.

## **Section III. As members in the community of scholars, we acknowledge the obligations:**

- A. To defend the right of associates to engage in free inquiry.
- B. To show due respect for the opinions of others.

C. To accept a share of faculty responsibility for governance of the academic institution.

#### **Section IV. Faculty seek above all to be effective teachers and scholars.**

A. The faculty member's primary responsibility is to the instructional role within the institution. A faculty member determines the amount and character of the work done outside the institution with due regard to his/her paramount responsibilities within the institution.

B. There is an obligation to give due notice in the event of interruption or termination of services.

#### **Section V. As educators, we accept certain obligations to the community at large:**

A. Whether inside or outside the classroom, we avoid creating the impression that, when speaking as individuals, we speak or act for the college.

B. We accept the obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to promote public understanding of academic freedom.

#### **Section VI. We work to promote the rights of students.**

A. The mission statement of the California Community Colleges expressly requires free and fair access to community college instruction.

B. Faculty accept the obligation to present the subject matter of the course as announced to the students and to cover the approved curriculum.

# PIERCE COLLEGE FACULTY CODE OF ETHICS WITH OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

Adopted by the Senate December 4, 1995

While there are many definitions of what it means to be a professional, common to them all is the belief that a professional is a member of a self-regulating body. To this end, the Senate of the Pierce College Faculty has adopted the following Code of Ethics with operational guidelines.

This code has been modelled after that adopted by the American Association of University Professors, but differs significantly from that code in that it specifically addresses the special obligations of Community College faculty.

This code is adopted with the hope that professionalism will be enhanced by making our values explicit and insisting on a campus culture that promotes and protects these values.

## **Section I. We acknowledge our responsibility to seek and state the truth:**

A. We recognize our obligation to develop and maintain scholarly competence.

1. We recognize the importance of remaining current in our discipline.
2. Faculty members are encouraged to avail themselves of opportunities to participate in professional development.

B. We acknowledge our responsibility to defend the right of free inquiry, and to respect the judgment, style, and point of view of others, even though they may not coincide with our own.

1. Faculty do not give up their Constitutional rights to profess views or engage in lawful activities that may in fact offend their colleagues, students or the community. At the same time a disregard for individual sensitivity, especially in the areas such as religion or politics or life style, can detract from the student's ability to benefit from instruction.

Accordingly, faculty should avoid derisive or hostile comments within the classroom.

2. Faculty show respect for thoughtful opinions that differ from their own points of view.

C. We accept the obligation to practice intellectual honesty.

1. We exercise care to distinguish fact, opinion of others, professional opinion, and personal opinion.

2. Faculty recognize the obligation to verify and document corrections to text material when that text material seems inaccurate to the faculty member.

3. Faculty acknowledge credit due to others, however small their contribution.

## **Section II. Faculty encourage the free pursuit of learning by acknowledging our obligations:**

### A. To respect students as individuals.

1. The Pierce Faculty Senate resolved that it regards as unprofessional conduct any instructor belittling, harassing or otherwise intimidating any student, even when the intention is to shame the student into learning. Faculty are encouraged to explore less confrontational alternatives to resolve problems of poor motivation or lack of preparation

2. Faculty are obligated to respect the rights of students as individuals when conflicts with colleagues or with administrators occur. Every effort should be made to avoid allowing students to become pawns or innocent victims when conflict arises in the governance of the institution.

### B. To serve as intellectual guide and advisor.

1. Faculty recognize the obligation to encourage students' individual intellectual growth through discussion and study outside class hours.

2. Faculty should welcome students seeking advising in the faculty member's area of expertise.

### C. To foster honest academic conduct.

1. Faculty shall encourage the personal best effort of each student.

2. Faculty shall communicate and enforce sanctions for students found guilty of cheating on examinations or plagiarizing written work.

### D. To ensure that evaluation reflects the student's true academic merit, and NOT personality, race, religion, political activism, personal beliefs, or other non-academic criteria.

1. District policy explicitly states that no student can be excused from the course final examination.

2. Final examinations are to be given according to the final exam schedule unless conflicts due to the student's transfer to another institution or similar emergencies arise. When such emergencies do occur, it is advisable to have the proper documentation at hand.

3. Fairness of evaluation in the academic setting requires following established and well communicated procedures for adding students and excluding students from classes.

4. Faculty should avoid situations in which, for personal reasons, their ability to fairly evaluate any student might be compromised.

5. Faculty should be mindful that the schedule of classes guarantees students the right to review their grades within one year of the time their class has ended.

### E. To respect the confidential nature of the faculty/student relationship.

1. It is a violation of trust and in violation of federal law to disregard the student's right to privacy ( e.g . by posting grades with students' names or social security numbers

attached).

2. Whenever possible, faculty should handle disciplinary, academic, and personal problems with individual students in a confidential setting.

3. Information of a personal nature obtained about students during the course of professional activities should be treated as privileged information.

F. To always treat students as ends in themselves, and never as means to our own ends.

1. It is unethical to solicit students within the class setting for outside activities not reasonably connected with the goals of the course, especially when these activities are to the faculty member's own benefit either personally or monetarily.

2. Except for texts or other necessary course materials sold through a bookstore or similar outlet, it is unethical to require students to purchase services or materials that create a financial benefit to the faculty member.

3. Faculty must avoid any situation which creates a potential conflict of interest. (NOTE: a conflict of interest occurs whenever personal pursuits might compromise a faculty member in the pursuit of professional activities. Nothing illegal or unethical need occur for a conflict of interest to arise. Simply allowing oneself to be in a position where personal interests might conflict with professional duty is sufficient to cause a conflict of interest. For example, nepotism rules are imposed to avoid conflict of interest. Nepotism does not mean faculty have done anything unethical, but only that faculty cannot be allowed to place themselves in a position where personal interests might potentially compromise professional obligations.)

G. To create a learning environment of trust and sensitivity.

1. Respecting students as individuals is an ethical imperative for faculty in order to promote a learning environment that is sensitive to the diverse components of our student population. We explicitly endorse and embrace the general policy that, "All programs and activities of the Los Angeles Community College District shall be operated in a manner which is free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, creed, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, age, handicap, [disability], or veterans' status."

2. Personal, financial or sexual exploitation of students by faculty members is a clear violation of trust and an abuse of power. We are aware that Calif. Civil Code, Section 51.9 as amended in 1994 by SB 612 defines sexual harassment as sexual advances that are persistent or severe after notice is given that they are unwelcome. We hold that care must be taken not to offend the sexual sensibilities of others either intentionally or unintentionally, and believe that any sexual advances should be presumed unwelcome, even when they are in response to student actions.

H. To protect and advance academic freedom of students.

1. Diverse ideas should be encouraged and treated with respect.

### **Section III. As members in the community of scholars, we acknowledge the obligations:**

A. To defend the right of associates to engage in free inquiry.

1. Faculty recognize the importance of tenure in the protection of academic freedom.
2. It is the responsibility of all faculty to select instructional materials that assure free inquiry.
3. The right of individual faculty to select texts for their own courses is specifically recognized.

B. To show due respect for the opinions of others.

1. The Pierce Faculty Senate has resolved that it regards it as unprofessional conduct for faculty members to criticize or denigrate their colleagues in a classroom setting.
2. The exchange of diverse viewpoints is to be encouraged within the college community.
3. Formal governing bodies of the faculty community explicitly agree that personal differences between faculty will not be the basis for judgments on issues at hand.

C To accept a share of faculty responsibility for governance of the academic institution and appropriate utilization of its resources.

1. In addition to teaching courses, full-time faculty are responsible for holding office hours, participating in departmental decision making, and making other contributions as needed to enhance the culture and governance within the academic institution.
2. Faculty are reminded that it is unethical to use campus resources, such as computer technologies, printers, phones, mail and reprographic services for personal purposes. Furthermore, it is unethical to remove equipment from the campus for personal use.

D. To fulfill our responsibilities as specified in Article 13 of our contract of employment with the LACCD.

### **Section IV Faculty seek above all to be effective teachers and scholars.**

A. The faculty member's primary responsibility is to the instructional role within the institution. A faculty member determines the amount and character of the work done outside the institution with due regard to his/her paramount responsibilities within the institution.

B. There is an obligation to give due notice in the event of interruption or termination of services.

1. It is very helpful if instructors make available a course syllabus so that chairpersons can give guidance when a substitute instructor becomes necessary.

2. The district provides liberal personal leave and sabbatical options for faculty. It is unethical to utilize sick leave, personal necessity leave, etc. for other than their stated purpose.

## **Section V. As educators, we accept certain obligations to the community at large:**

A. Whether inside or outside the classroom, we avoid creating the impression that, when speaking as individuals, we speak or act for the college.

B. We accept the obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to promote public understanding of academic freedom.

C. In the conduct of our professional duties faculty members are obliged to behave in a manner consistent with the Education Code and the laws of the land.

## **Section VI. We work to promote the rights of students.**

A. The mission statement of the California Community Colleges expressly requires free and fair access to community college instruction.

1. Faculty are obligated to follow proper registration procedure when adding students to classes. For example, where there is a waiting list for a course, faculty should first take students from that list before adding anyone not on the list.

2. While faculty have full authority to add students to their classes, optimal class sizes have been established with educational objectives in mind. Hence faculty are encouraged to pursue the intent of the existing union contract.

B. Faculty accept the obligation to present the subject matter of the course as announced to the students and to cover the approved curriculum.

1. It is improper to persistently intrude material that has no relation to the subject.

2. It is inappropriate to utilize class time in any significant manner either to propagandize students or to pursue one's own extracurricular interests when those interests have no bearing on course content.