

Historical Context

Institutional integrity, including high ethical standards, is largely derived from a sense that the institution incorporates principles of accountability, responsibility, honesty, equity, and professionalism in the formulation of its policies and procedures. The development and implementation of policies and procedures must also be reasonable, consistent, and fair. Furthermore, the individuals who represent the institution must behave with integrity, for without a cohesive and shared sense of institutional integrity, the work of the College may appear inconsistent, unfair, or unethical.

In 1999, TMCC's primary governance body, the College Governance Council, formed the Institutional Integrity Design Team to address Standard 9 for the TMCC Accreditation Interim Report in 2000. While various policies and procedures addressing issues of integrity and ethical conduct were in place, the Design Team recognized that the College did not have one cohesive statement regarding institutional integrity. From this finding, the Design Team developed an ethics statement and presented it to the TMCC Faculty Senate Professional Standards Committee in September 2000; after drafts circulated through both Professional Standards and the College Governance Council, the document was titled the "TMCC Statement of Institutional Values" and subsequently passed by both Faculty Senate and the College Governance Council in spring 2001 (See Exhibit 9.1, TMCC Statement of Institutional Values). With the stated goal of "strengthening the institution's integrity and enhancing the dignity of the individuals within it," this statement identified eight "principle stances" defining institutional integrity at TMCC: academic freedom, responsibility, respect, honesty, accountability, elimination of conflicts of interest, equality, and tolerance. Additionally, the statement referred to TMCC-specific and UCCSN policies and procedures. The College Governance Council recommended that this statement be included in TMCC publications, including the *TMCC Administrative Manual* and the *TMCC Faculty/Staff Handbook*. However, at the time of this report, the TMCC Statement of Institutional Values has not been widely disseminated, nor has it been included in college publications.

In the past few years, TMCC has not experienced any major events that could be loosely termed evidence of a crisis of institutional integrity. The constellation of events in 2000, however, could be discussed in these terms. Prior to classes starting in fall 2000, administrators discovered that part-time instructional budget resources were not adequate to cover the number of courses offered. As a result, a significant number of classes were canceled at the last minute, program development was halted, and full-time faculty hiring was delayed. This crisis had a detrimental effect on hundreds of students' schedules, created a pervasive, if temporary, loss of faculty and staff confidence in TMCC's administration, and generated a perception in the Reno-Sparks area that the College was not operating using sound fiscal principles and judgment. Up to that time, department chairs, operating with relatively little budget information, would simply roll over previous semester schedules and add or delete as they deemed necessary, relying on the guidance of the deans and the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Since there was no systematic institutional method for gathering data needed to guide instructional college operations, TMCC overextended itself by offering courses it could not finance responsibly.

It must be noted that many of the circumstances that led to the 2000 crisis were a direct result of growth. During this time TMCC grew from a small community college, relatively insular in its operations, to a medium-sized community college. TMCC had not as yet developed and instituted the policies and procedures it needed to keep pace with its institutional, student, and program growth. Additionally, the situation was further complicated by the institutional instability and atmosphere of uncertainty created with the rapid succession of presidents and vice presidents during this period.

The positive outcome of the 2000 crisis was a move to utilize data-based planning and to exam all college processes both through the lens of this data and in more global terms as a product of perceptions and articulated needs. Subsequent to 2000, TMCC's leadership made communication between various college constituencies of paramount importance. This process of growth and transition has been painful at times for all members of the college community; however, it has resulted in a college

culture united in its consensus that TMCC's success on every level of operation depends upon data-driven planning, ethical policy formation, and consistent and fair practices.

Current Situation

When the search for the president's position was conducted in 2002, the search committee, inclusive of faculty, staff, community members, and Regents, identified the need for a president who could, in essence, heal TMCC. When President Ringle was appointed as a result of that search, he immediately began a review of college policies and procedures and initiated a process for identifying key positions on the campus. Additionally, he identified the seven initiatives that form the basis of the *Strategic Planning* document.

The College Governance Council was dissolved, and in its place, the Planning Council was instituted and charged with creating a five-year plan to "advance a shared vision"; to examine, review, and update TMCC's Mission Statement; to "ensure communication, shared concerns, input and document review across campus and with key stakeholders"; and to "enhance mutual understanding, cooperation, and synergy among decision makers" (TMCC Planning Council Charge, Web site). The charge of the Planning Council and President Ringle's repeated statements that the College needed to do what was right for students and the rest would follow have had a tangible effect on the perception of TMCC. Seventy-three percent of the respondents to the TMCC 2004 Survey on Campus Climate indicated that TMCC has well defined goals for the future (versus 39 percent in 2002); 55 percent agreed that TMCC has a shared sense of direction (versus 30 percent in 2002). This sense of defined goals and shared direction, supported by reasonable, fair, and consistent policies and procedures, is the foundation of TMCC's institutional integrity.

President Ringle assembled an administrative team based on national searches with clearly defined processes. The vice presidents (Academic Affairs, Finance and Administrative Services, and Student Services) have identified measures to improve the integrity and efficacy of their respective units and have instituted methods to measure improvement and results. Overall planning efforts at TMCC, including the efforts of the Planning Council and the focus on clearly defined charges, has resulted in an increased sense of credibility, both with the various constituencies within the College and in the larger Reno/Sparks community.

Ethics in Management and Operations

(9.A.1)

The network that contributes to the management and operations of TMCC—the Board of Regents, college administrators, faculty, and staff—is committed to ensuring that the College operates with high ethical standards. The *Board of Regents Handbook* contains an Ethical Code of Conduct that applies to the Board of Regents; additionally, it details UCCSN policies on appointment, evaluation, tenure, grievances, sexual harassment, and many other operational procedures; UCCSN policies set uniform standards for all eight institutions and their operations. The *TMCC Institutional Bylaws* are included in the *Board of Regents Handbook* and include policies on the evaluation of academic faculty, the handling of personnel documents, and other management and operation policies and procedures.

TMCC is subject to audits by the UCCSN Internal Audit Department, some of which are regularly scheduled system-based UCCSN audits and some of which are done on an as-needed basis. According to the Vice Chancellor for Internal Audit and Risk Management, the Internal Audit Department conducted fourteen audits between July 1, 2000 and June 30, 2004 (See Exhibit 9.2, Audits 2000-04). The auditing process is designed to ensure sound fiscal management and to confirm institutional integrity through demonstrated accountability. The results of annual financial audits of TMCC and the TMCC Foundation by an independent certified public accounting firm show a record of fiscal responsibility and compliance with UCCSN policies, state funds procedures, and federal laws (See Standard 7 for a complete discussion of TMCC financial practices and audits). The 2003 State of Nevada Legislature requested a number of audits within the system, including TMCC. These audits determined that TMCC adheres to purchasing procedures and competitive bid processes established as policy and administered through Business Center North.

To help ensure integrity and high ethical standards at the institutional administrative level, the *TMCC Administrative Manual* details operational policies for accounting, travel, purchasing, gifts, fund-raising, budgets, benefits, and personnel issues, among others. Other college documents, such as the *TMCC Faculty/Staff Handbook*, the *Search Committee Manual*, the *Tenure Filing* document, and the Faculty Qualification Policy, were developed to inculcate and promote high ethical standards in college operations. The TMCC 2004 Survey on Campus Climate shows that 80 percent of respondents understand contractual obligations

regarding code of conduct and ethical behavior, an impressive percentage that can be attributed to the dissemination of policies and procedures and the general atmosphere of the College. Moreover, the TMCC 2004 Survey on Campus Climate and the results of the President's Evaluation Survey indicate that members of the college community believe President Ringle is a proponent of high ethical standards. His fall 2004 welcome back speech and his monthly presidential e-mails have underscored his commitment to fostering solid communication at TMCC.

The Vice President of Academic Affairs is equally committed to maintaining high ethical standards in TMCC's academic programs and instruction. For example, the Vice President of Academic Affairs sent department chairs to a one-week department chair academy in both the spring of 2004 and 2005 and supports retreats for the deans for the same reason. These actions are designed to ensure that all representatives at every administrative level engage in consistent application of operational policies and procedures and are able to communicate these policies and procedures with consistency of message and application. All instructionally related additional assignments that have stipends or reassigned time are coordinated through the Vice President of Academic Affairs and posted by the appropriate administrator's office, in compliance with the Nevada Faculty Alliance (NFA) Contract. This process of notification has been a requirement of the NFA Contract; however, in the past, the spirit of this process was not always followed. Furthermore, the Vice President of Academic Affairs oversaw the creation of the *Tenure Filing* document and the Faculty Qualification Policy; he also initiated the general education, outcomes assessment, and curriculum revision processes to bring into dialogue three significant and clearly intricately connected discussions that had previously been isolated from each other.

The reorganization of the academic departments, begun in fall 2003, also demonstrated the Vice President of Academic Affairs' commitment to the principles of institutional integrity and ethical conduct. The rationale for the reorganization was to strengthen TMCC's educational programs, streamline decision-making, and improve organizational effectiveness. Faculty, department chairs, the academic leaders group, the Faculty Senate, the Extended Cabinet, and the President's Cabinet all participated in the final proposal, which was approved by the Board of Regents

in January 2004. In line with the overall principles of shared governance and academic excellence, the process was open, inclusive, and premised upon the highest standards for achieving institutional and educational excellence.

The Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services is likewise committed to establishing fair, open, and consistent policies and procedures regarding the College's budget processes and outcomes. The Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services established the Budget Advisory Committee in the fall of 2004 to gather input from the college community regarding areas of concern and is currently in the process of implementing the recommendations of the committee: placing the budget online for campus constituent access, putting a budget policy and procedures manual online for consistency, and instituting a budget process of input from the department level up with a clear and open process at every tier. Additionally, the Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services has made it a goal of her area to cross-train personnel so that there is a shared sense of knowledge, responsibility, and accountability. The Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services also formed the Facilities Master Plan Committee to develop the *2004 Facilities Master Plan*; the process was open to the entire college community and had membership from administration, faculty, staff, students, and community members. With these processes in place and by insisting on an atmosphere of openness and consistency, the Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services has ensured through her leadership institutional integrity and an environment reflective of the highest of ethical standards.

TMCC created the position of Vice President for Student Services in 2004. Student Services had been variously positioned in TMCC's organizational structure; until recently, Student Services had been represented by a dean but had never had a vice president. President Ringle recognized that Student Services needed a vice president, creating a fairer and more equitable conceptualization of Student Services' role as comparable to instructional services in achieving student success. The position and role of the Vice President for Student Services is a further assurance that the integrity of Student Services is consistent with TMCC's institutional mission, educational goals, and the other operational units of the College. The Vice President for Student Services provides the leadership, direction, coordination, and supervision of all service areas under Student Services. Having the Vice President for Student Services ensures that all programs, services, and personnel within the Student Services Division collaborate in the implementation of TMCC's Mission Statement and

Strategic Goals. The Vice President for Student Services has identified teamwork, unity, ongoing organizational refinement, enhanced communication, professional development, and collaborative relationships across TMCC as the division's management and operational goals. These goals and practices are designed to enable the integrity of student development concepts and the inclusion of practices that facilitate student recruitment, advisement, retention, and persistence.

Additionally, TMCC combined the Affirmative Action and the Multicultural Diversification Offices in 2004 and created the Equity and Diversity Office. A director was hired in 2004 after a national search. Equity and Diversity monitors and advocates for TMCC's commitment to equity, diversity, and affirmative action in recruitment, hiring, and personnel actions and in development and delivery of college-wide programs that encompass academic and non-academic initiatives and co-curricular programs. This office's promotion and dissemination of TMCC's commitment to equal opportunity, equity, and diversity at all levels of operations is a major contribution to the integrity of the College.

TMCC has developed manuals and handbooks that outline policies and procedures for faculty and staff. Without exception, these documents reflect the College's expectations of accountability, responsibility, honesty, equity, and professionalism. Coupled with reasonable, fair, and consistent implementation of their contents, these manuals and handbooks document the college culture's basic commitment to institutional integrity and individual accountability. With few exceptions, these documents are widely distributed and available in hard copy and on TMCC's Web site. Among these documents are the *TMCC Administrative Manual* (referenced earlier) and the *TMCC Faculty/Staff Handbook*, which contains non-discrimination, whistleblower, human research protection, intellectual property, computer usage, sexual harassment, facilities, and grant money policies. These policies establish expectations and accountability for management and operation, the first step in establishing integrity and ethics at all subsequent levels. Along with the publication of these policies, leadership holds workshops for classified staff on policy issues ranging from workload expectations to the NFA Contract. The *TMCC Faculty/Staff Handbook* is given to all new employees in hard copy form, and updates to the document are distributed via e-mail periodically to faculty and staff; this document is also available on the TMCC Web site, as is the *Part-time Faculty Handbook*.

TMCC's Human Resources Office ensures the integrity and consistent application of personnel matters and conditions related to employment for all college employees. Human Resources developed a *Search Committee Manual* in 2003 to create a clearly defined, efficient, effective, and fair process. All TMCC positions are now filled by national searches unless the position requires local expertise. In fall 2004, the TMCC Diversity Campus Affairs Committee formed to assist in the articulation of the Strategic Goal for Diversity. A subcommittee of this committee focuses on workforce diversity, and a cohort of its members are currently being trained to participate, ex-officio, in campus hiring committees to ensure the integrity of the process with future hiring committees.

The TMCC Foundation has guidelines for gift reporting, handling of funds, and handling of Foundation grants. These published guidelines help ensure the integrity and ethical standards of these processes. While the guidelines are clearly established, because the Foundation is somewhat external to academic operations, these guidelines are not widely disseminated throughout the College (See Standard 7.D for a discussion of the TMCC Foundation).

The Nevada Faculty Alliance (NEA), an affiliate of the AAUP, is the collective bargaining unit at TMCC and works with faculty and administration to “strength[en] the integrity of higher education in Nevada” (NEA Web site). The *Board of Regents Handbook* sanctions collective bargaining, which gives NEA a legal stake in the terms and conditions of faculty employment. Faculty membership in NEA is low—20 TMCC members in fall 2004—and the low number has been attributed to the cost of dues, a perception of ineffectiveness, a lack of communication, and a perception that membership is not necessary for there to be fair and ethical treatment of faculty at TMCC.

By defining policies and procedures for students, TMCC establishes high ethical standards and demonstrates institutional integrity. The Dean and Associate Dean of Students have been proactive in the development and implementation of TMCC's student conduct and complaint policies as well as in promoting awareness and assistance to the College through training workshops, consultations, and orientations. Written documents regarding student conduct and procedures appear in the *Student Handbook*, on the TMCC Web site, and in the *2004-2005 TMCC Course Catalog*.

Integrity and ethical standards in the academic advising of students is evident in TMCC's commitment to place students at appropriate levels in general education classes. In 1997, TMCC adopted ACCUPLACER as its testing tool for

students. Used to assess students for placement in mathematics and English, it is also the College's standard test for financial aid students to establish “ability to benefit” status—that is, high school equivalency. The Testing Center and the Institutional Research Office work collaboratively to establish placement scores using student samples and pre- and post-tests in courses.

Due to the computer-adaptive nature of ACCUPLACER tests, the program identifies the students' level of ability in the tested subject, thus providing a higher accuracy of testing and, subsequently, placement. After taking the test, students are sent to the Advisement Center for advisement and scheduling guidance. The ACCUPLACER testing process demonstrates TMCC's integrity and ethical standards for ensuring the academic success of its students in mathematics and English (See Standard 3.B for a fuller discussion of assessment and placement practices at TMCC).

While TMCC demonstrates integrity in placement and advisement policies and procedures, one area that needs attention is the timely processing of Degree Audit Reports (DAR). Students routinely request DAR reports to determine their academic progress, often prior to applying for graduation. The turn around time on DAR reports can be up to four months, which affects students' ability to determine in a timely fashion their academic progress toward a specific degree or certificate. In response to this delay, students often see counselors or advisors, who can access transcripts and provide evaluation and advisement. Additional staff members in the Admissions and Records Office are being cross-trained to produce DAR reports in a more timely manner; additionally, the Vice President of Student Services has identified the timely production of DAR reports as a unit priority and is working with the Director of Admissions and Records to address the issue.

The integrity of students' rights, specifically privacy, is maintained by Admissions and Records at TMCC. Admissions and Records performs a major role in the promotion and maintenance of FERPA guidelines in order to safeguard student records, confidentiality, and rights of privacy. Various means of communication are utilized in order to inform campus personnel of FERPA regulations, including postings on the Web site, printed documents sent to all staff, e-mail messages, and designated Admissions and Records staff who attend campus meetings and present FERPA information. Additionally, FERPA policy is displayed on the Web-Reg section of the TMCC Web site. Furthermore, the integrity of student records is assured in the “TMCC Privacy Notice for Printed Materials,” through ongoing

training of personnel, through restricted access to files and the Student Information System (SIS), and through consistent review and oversight of such information by the Director and Assistant Director of Admissions and Records. TMCC lists all relevant admission and registration procedures as well as student responsibilities in its course catalogs and class schedules (both hard copies and online formats), and in the *Student Handbook* and the Student Rights and Responsibilities section of the *TMCC Administrative Manual*.

TMCC works with many external agencies and organizations in surrounding communities. While there is no tangible evidence to support TMCC's commitment to high ethical standards in its dealings with local agencies and organizations, there is no evidence to suggest otherwise. TMCC lists more than 30 active advisory committees that support the local business community and academic programs at the College. These committees serve as communication conduits whereby local experts or business owners work with college departments to define needs, expectations, and outcomes. These committees thus provide a "reality check" with the operations of the College and help create a shared sense of commitment and responsibility, leading ultimately to the integrity of the respective programs.

Policy, Procedure, Publication Evaluation and Revision (9.A.2)

As TMCC has grown in the last ten years—from an FTE of 3,594 in 1993 to an FTE of 5,544 in 2003 (*2004 TMCC FactBook*)—leadership has engaged in ongoing evaluation and revision of policies, procedures, and publications to ensure the ethical conduct of all constituencies and the integrity of materials disseminated about TMCC.

In response to the 1995 Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges Evaluation Committee Report, TMCC revised its *Strategic Planning* document and Mission Statement in 1997; in 2002, President Ringle established the Planning Council, which then drafted a new Mission Statement and Strategic Goals with objectives for the seven initiatives identified by the President. In October 2004, the Board of Regents approved TMCC's *Strategic Planning* document, including the revised Mission Statement. This revision, undertaken at a point of growth and administrative stability in the College, has clearly defined the direction TMCC will take in the next 5-10 years. Leadership has also engaged in facilities planning over the last ten years with the *1995 TMCC Master Plan*, the *2000 Facilities Master Plan*, and the *1997-2004 College Strategic Plan*. These planning

efforts have been updated with the *2004 Facilities Master Plan*, a vision for the College that yokes together academic program development and facilities planning for the first time in an efficient and effective manner (See Standard 8 for a fuller discussion of the *2004 Facilities Master Plan*). This comprehensive plan will be utilized to shape academic and physical space programming for the next ten years.

In addition to these larger manuscript revisions, institutionally focused policies, procedures, and publications have been revised. The *TMCC Institutional Bylaws* were reviewed and revised in 2003-2004; the *TMCC Faculty/Staff Handbook* is revised every semester, according to the Director of Human Resources, as is the *Part-time Faculty Handbook*; the *TMCC Administrative Manual* is in the process of being revised to incorporate UCCSN and TMCC-specific changes. New policies have been developed as well. For example, Information Technologies Operations (ITO) developed the TMCC Computer and Network Use Policy, establishing guidelines for the appropriate use of computers and networks at TMCC; additionally, ITO developed guidelines for the use of Groupwise, the TMCC-networked e-mail system. ITO also placed a statement that pops up prior to network log-in that reminds users of their rights and responsibilities.

The Public Information Office (PIO) establishes policies regarding the public dissemination of information about TMCC in 2002-2003 to ensure that TMCC represents itself consistently internally and externally. Sexual harassment policies and training are offered every year for TMCC employees, and both are revised and updated every year. The sabbatical policy was revised by the Faculty Senate Professional Standards Committee in spring 2004, and policies and procedures for tenure application were reviewed by the Faculty Senate Professional Standards Committee in 2003-2004. In conjunction with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Faculty Senate Professional Standards Committee created the *Tenure Filing* document to standardize the process for tenure track faculty and increase consistency and fairness in the application process across all divisions at TMCC. The student appraisal form, used by students for the evaluation of instruction, was also revised through Faculty Senate in 2003-2004 and implemented in spring 2004. UCCSN mandates policy regarding textbook selection, and TMCC adopted the UCCSN guidelines.

Two areas of policy revision require attention. First, the student complaint policy has been in a state of flux and probably too much revision. Initiated by Faculty Senate and subsequently assigned to the Associate Dean of Student

Services, the policy was revised by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and sent to Faculty Senate. The issue has been shuffled back and forth between stakeholders, and the Vice President of Student Services has committed to bringing the policy and procedures to Faculty Senate in fall 2005. The second area of concern exists with hiring policies. Despite the creation of the *Search Committee Manual*, there are anecdotal reports of departures from policy and breaches of confidentiality in search processes.

Accurate and Consistent Representation

(9.A.3)

In order to create and maintain a “supportive, intellectually and culturally dynamic environment,” TMCC must represent itself accurately and consistently to all constituencies (Mission Statement, *Strategic Planning*, insert). TMCC’s PIO employs a variety of internal and external communication methods to inform college personnel and community constituents and is the media liaison for the College. PIO staff members write press releases to promote TMCC programs, help prepare faculty and staff for interviews, and write and design TMCC’s print and online publications.

To support and advance TMCC’s representation as an institution of high ethical standards and integrity, PIO provides accessibility to all PIO-related documents via the Public Information Web site. Additionally, PIO maintains a quality assurance process that includes a review function to ensure consistency in written, visual, and media communication and correspondence; provides consultation to TMCC departments and employees in the design, editing, and review of promotional materials, student recruitment and information documents, and other marketing tools; and provides oversight and review processes to ensure that TMCC publications are of professional quality and adhere to the requirements of format, logo use, and equal opportunity/affirmative action/equal access statements. Moreover, PIO utilizes internal and external communication methods that accurately and regularly inform college and community constituencies.

External communications that are intended for students and the larger community are designed, written, and edited by PIO staff. PIO staff members coordinate college-wide class schedules for fall, spring, and summer semesters and ensure their accuracy based on data supplied by departments; additionally, PIO produces specialized schedules for the Workforce Development and Continuing Education courses and Distance Education courses. PIO also produces the annual *TMCC Course Catalog*, which is available in hard copy and CD-ROM and is posted on

TMCC’s Web site. Since the course catalog functions as both a legal document detailing college policies, certificate, and degree programs, and as a marketing tool, PIO is particularly attentive to the accuracy and consistency of information contained therein. Additionally, PIO produces *TMCC Trends*, a newsletter for community leaders and donors that was produced on a monthly basis in 2003-2004, was discontinued for 2004-2005, and will be reinstated on a quarterly basis in 2005-2006. PIO also produces brochures, flyers, posters, and fact sheets that promote TMCC programs, both externally and internally. PIO distributes “This Week @ TMCC,” an electronic newsletter that contains TMCC Events, College Community News, and TMCC Marketplace.

PIO’s proactive approach in developing, implementing, and maintaining policies that ensure high standards and consistency in representations of TMCC reflects the best of college practices designed to ensure institutional integrity. External recognition of this significant office’s efforts occurred in 2004 when PIO won four awards from the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations.

While the PIO Web site outlines the policies in place to maintain a high level of quality, accuracy, and consistency in representations of TMCC, some college departments and personnel produce printed and electronic media that do not comply with these policies. Relatively universal access to electronic media makes it difficult to ensure complete compliance; PIO distributes its policies and attends regular administrative meetings, such as the Extended Cabinet and Planning Council meetings, as well as annual meetings with deans and department chairs, to discuss its role in monitoring representations of the College.

Conflict of Interest Policies (9.A.4)

Conflict of interest policies appear throughout the *Board of Regents Handbook*; many of these policies have been incorporated into *TMCC’s Bylaws* and define TMCC policy and procedures. The *Board of Regents Handbook* contains specific policies that apply to the Regents as well as policies that apply to members of the UCCSN, including references to conflict of interest provisions in Nevada Revised Statutes. *TMCC Institutional Bylaws*, the *TMCC Faculty/Staff Handbook*, and *TMCC Administrative Manual* replicate *Board of Regents Handbook* language in outlining specific prohibited behaviors that constitute a conflict of interest. Broadly speaking, any activities that could place a UCCSN employee “in a conflict of interest between their official activities and any other interest or obligation” are prohibited (Title 4, Chapter 3.5). Furthermore, the same section states that all UCCSN employees must “disqualify

themselves from participating in a decision when a financial or personal interest is present.” These broad policies are further defined regarding issues such as nepotism, compensated outside professional or scholarly services, naming of buildings, and textbook selection.

Two issues, the compensated outside professional or scholarly services and textbook selection, are of particular application to TMCC administrators, faculty, and staff. The *Board of Regents Handbook*, in addition to clearly stating that outside activities must not interfere with academic duties, specifies that outside activities “shall occupy no more than one day’s equivalent time per week (20 percent), exclusive of evenings, weekends, and holidays” (Title 4, Chapter 3.7). Recognizing that administrators, faculty, and staff may contract for outside services related to their professions, the policy is intended to define the terms of the employee’s contract and recognize the primary responsibility to the UCCSN position. The textbook selection policy was created to affirm academic freedom and the responsibility inherent in textbook selection but address the perception of conflict of interest, particularly in the selection of one’s authored text for instructional use.

Ultimately, recognizing conflict of interest is largely dependent on the integrity of the individual. Instances that violate conflict of interest policies are difficult to identify and regulate, but the clear, consistent communication of UCCSN policies and expected compliance set the boundaries and create an atmosphere of accountability at TMCC. Based on the 80 percent of respondents in the TMCC 2004 Survey on Campus Climate who indicated they understood the contractual obligation of conflict of interest, TMCC has clearly communicated expectations in this regard.

Free Pursuit and Dissemination of Knowledge (9.A.5)

In his fall 2002 State of the College address to faculty and staff, President Ringle expressed his vision for TMCC by referring to the six principles of a strong campus community proposed by Ernest Boyer in 1990. Two of these principles, an open community—“a place where freedom of expression is uncompromisingly protected and where civility is powerfully affirmed”—and a just community—“a place where each person is honored and where diversity is aggressively pursued”—have particular applicability to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge at TMCC. Two years later in his fall 2004 State

of the College address, President Ringle returned to Boyer’s principles and indicated that TMCC was making good progress toward integrating all six principles, noting that “we continually affirm and recognize academic integrity as a core institutional value.”⁴⁹

TMCC’s institutional mission depends upon and supports the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. Without the commitment to that core principle, the College cannot provide “access for lifelong learning opportunities” nor create “a supportive, intellectually and culturally dynamic environment” (TMCC Mission Statement, *Strategic Planning*, insert). Implicit in the Strategic Goal of Achieving Academic Excellence is the notion that knowledge, or education, is both fluid and holistic. It can never be the by-product of a hegemonic institutional structure. The Strategic Goal of Diversity also supports the principle of the free pursuit of knowledge as TMCC “accommodates the educational needs and interests of its demographically changing student body” (*Strategic Planning*, p. 5). As TMCC flexes to meet the educational needs of the community, leadership must support both students and faculty by creating an infrastructure, an educational environment, and a pervasive ethos of institutional support conducive to the dissemination of knowledge.

TMCC demonstrates its commitment to academic freedom in a variety of policies and procedures. First and foremost, the *Board of Regents Handbook* affirms the centrality of academic freedom: “Freedom in teaching is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student in learning” (Title 2, Chapter 2). The policy further states that it is the “obligation” of the teacher to use “candor and integrity” in the classroom, even when the topic may be controversial. It is important to note that the *Board of Regents Handbook* provides explicit protection for faculty members who express opinions that may be controversial or unpopular.

The 1999 Institutional Integrity document outlines TMCC’s stance regarding academic freedom and affirms the right of all members of the college community to freedom of inquiry, opinion, and speech, including faculty and students; it further recognizes the responsibility of administrators in protecting these rights (See Exhibit 9.3, 1999 Institutional Integrity document). While not widely disseminated or overtly referred to, this stance is reflected in TMCC documents, including the *TMCC Administrative Manual*, the *TMCC Faculty/Staff Handbook*, the *Part-time Faculty Handbook* (all of which recognize academic

⁴⁹ See the video *Encampment: Dr. Ernest Boyer*, August 22, 1995 address for a full transcript of “Six Components of a Civil Campus Community.”

responsibility in conjunction with academic freedom). TMCC's administrators and faculty recognize the American Association of University Professors' policies on academic freedom, tenure, and due process as reflected in TMCC policy documents. Recognizing that tenure is an important protection associated with academic freedom, TMCC has outlined the responsibilities of tenure candidates in the *Tenure Filing* document and the responsibilities of tenure committees and tenure committee chairs in the *Tenure Chair and Committee Responsibility Handbook* (September 2003). TMCC has clearly articulated statements of support for academic freedom and tenure that demonstrate firm commitments to both academic freedom and responsibility—for both faculty and students. The TMCC 2004 Survey on Campus Climate provides evidence that administrators, faculty, and staff understand the importance of academic freedom. Sixty percent of respondents agree that TMCC's atmosphere encourages the open expression of ideas, up from 48 percent in the UCCSN 2002 Survey on Campus Climate.

Analysis and Appraisal

The Self-Study Standard 9 Committee commends TMCC for the following achievements:

- TMCC provides clearly articulated institutional policies commensurate with UCCSN guidelines. These policies delineate TMCC's expectations for and definitions of ethical behavior—for the College as a whole, its individual units, and the individuals who comprise the TMCC community.
- The administrative structure of the College has stabilized; all positions were filled following national searches. The addition of the Vice President of Student Services demonstrates a commitment to integrity in organizational structure.
- President Ringle keeps issues of institutional integrity active in e-newsletters, semester welcome back speeches, and other public communications.
- TMCC takes student success seriously and is clear and consistent in admission and registration procedures; the College uses responsible testing and placement for English and mathematics to ensure students' academic success.
- TMCC demonstrates its commitment to the broader Reno-Sparks community with its formation of a significant number of community-based advisory committees.

Next Steps

The Self-Study Standard 9 Committee makes the following recommendations:

- Leadership needs to communicate even more with various TMCC constituencies to promote active involvement of representatives from the entire TMCC community. This increase in communication would prove especially useful when reviewing policies, procedures, and publications.
- TMCC needs to revisit the TMCC Statement of Institutional Values and make an effort to disseminate these principles to the college community.
- Leadership needs to make an effort to combine the various statements articulating institutional expectations for ethical conduct and institutional integrity into one textual reference.