

Standard Nine - Institutional Integrity

The institution adheres to the highest ethical standards in its representation to its constituencies and the public; in its teaching, scholarship, and service; in its treatment of its students, faculty, and staff; and in its relationship with regulatory and accrediting agencies.

9.A.1

The institution, including governing board members, administrators, faculty, and staff, subscribes to, exemplifies, and advocates high ethical standards in the management and operations and in all of its dealings with students, the public, organizations, and external agencies.

An Institutional Integrity Design Team was formed five years ago in 1999 to address issues in Standard 9 for the 2000 accreditation review, and to draft a policy on Institutional Integrity. A TMCC Statement of Institutional Values document was created as a result. The document was approved by Faculty Senate February 9, 2001, and by the Planning and Policy Council April 27, 2001. A statement of principles aimed at strengthening the institution's integrity, it was intended at the time to include this statement of values in publications such as the Administrative Manual, Faculty/Staff handbook, and other college documents. The Statement of Institutional Values has not been widely publicized, however the principles within the document mirror many of the current policies and procedures addressing integrity and ethical issues at TMCC.

Some policies related to high ethical standards have been in place since before the 1995 accreditation, and others were recently created by the current administration. Many policies are now in place that did not exist before, and many that were in place have been revised to reflect a stronger commitment to integrity and ethical standards. All of these help TMCC maintain high ethical standards in its operations.

Governing Board Members

An Ethical Code of Conduct for the Board of Regents is in the University and Community College System of Nevada (UCCSN) Code (Title 4, Chapter 1). The TMCC bylaws in the UCCSN Code (Title 5, Chapter 4) include policies on the evaluation of academic faculty (i), handling of personnel documents (j), and grievance procedures (l). The UCCSN code (Title 2, Chapter 6) details policy on sexual harassment (also in the Faculty/Staff Handbook), Nepotism (Title 4, Chapter 3), and describes Academic Freedom (Title 2, Chapter 2). The UCCSN code is available on the Web at <http://system.nevada.edu/Board-of-R/Handbook/>.

Administrators

To help ensure integrity and high ethical standards at the administrative level, an Administrative Manual exists. The 255 page Administrative Manual is a large handbook covering operational policies on accounting, travel, purchasing, gifts, fund-raising, budgets, benefits, and personnel issues, among others. Revised three years ago, it will be revised again in the 2004-2005 year (See section 9.2.A).

President Dr. Philip Ringle is a strong proponent of high ethical standards, as evidenced by campus surveys, his fall 2004 welcome back speech, his monthly President's Message emails, and the general positive attitude the campus community has of him. The TMCC Survey on Campus Climate published in August 2004 underscores the high ethical standards and integrity of leadership under President Ringle's direction. According to the survey, on page 3, "Only 9% of respondents think that the President does not effectively address the challenges facing the College. 73% of respondents think that the President provides effective leadership for TMCC." On page 73 of the survey, under Open Ended Comments Regarding the President, six of the eight responses were positive, and included comments such as "Dr. Ringle is the best president of the 4 institutions that I've worked for." And, "The president rocks! The best TMCC has ever had."

The President's Evaluation Survey, completed in November 2004, also gives evidence President Ringle leads TMCC with integrity and high ethics. In the category "Progress Toward Master Plan Goals", 81% of responses strongly agreed and only 1% disagreed. The weakest category was "Personnel Management", where 64% of responses strongly agreed, and 13% strongly disagreed. Both surveys indicate a strong support of the president by the TMCC community, and a high level of integrity and ethical standards.

The Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Jowel Laguerre, also appears committed to integrity. For example, he sent all Department Chairs to a two-day statewide training seminar in spring of 2004. This helps to ensure consistent application of operational policies and procedures, and increases integrity across departments at the administrative level. He is supportive of retreats for the Deans for the same reason. Also, to ensure fairness and eliminate any favoritism, all additional assignments posted by the VPAA that have pay stipends are put out on campus GroupWise email, so that any employee who feels qualified to do the work may apply. Although this is an NFA contract requirement, it has not always been done in the past.

The Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services, Deloris Sanford, is committed to open, interactive communication, and participation in decisions and plans affecting the College. This has been demonstrated through several new initiatives. For example, she was responsible for the development of a new Facilities Master Plan. She formed a committee with membership representing faculty, support staff, students, administrators and community members, to help plan and complete a long-range Facilities Master Plan for the College. The process involved open forums for all College members, and meetings with other entities such as the City of Reno and the Desert Research Institute. The plan was approved by the Board of Regents in December 2004. Other examples of her commitment are: a new process for requesting improvements or changes to existing facilities, where requests are received from a member of the College, compiled and priorities established, with status reports provided on a periodic basis; and an open budget process with input beginning at the department level, and periodic reporting of budget decisions in open meetings and on the TMCC website. With these processes, and through sharing the information with all areas of the college community, integrity and high ethical standards are ensured.

A major development this past year (2004) in the leadership and administration of the College was the creation of the new position of Vice President of Student Services. The Vice President of Student Services provides the leadership, direction, coordination, and supervision of all service areas under the auspices of student services. Juanita Chrysanthou serves in this capacity and assumes a critical role in the promotion and support of institutional integrity. The position is the chief student services officer reporting directly to the College President and serves as a member of the College's senior staff sitting on the Presidents Cabinet. This ensures that all programs, services, and personnel within the Division of Student Services collaborate in the implementation of the mission and are represented in all institutional initiatives. Vice President Chrysanthou is proactive in promoting teamwork and unity, on-going organizational refinement, enhancing communication, providing professional development opportunities, and building collaborative relationships across all campus constituencies. This facilitates the integrity and inclusion of student development concepts and practices, that promote enrollment management, student recruitment, retention, and persistence into the college mission statement and strategic plan, permeate the academic program requirements, and are reflective in departmental and program goals. The role of Vice President of Student Services is a further assurance that the integrity of student services is consistent with the standards, mission, and goals of Truckee Meadows Community College.

Faculty and Staff

Many manuals and handbooks exist at TMCC that define policy and procedure that affect faculty and staff. Without exception, these policies advocate high ethical standards by guiding the TMCC community along a path of high ethics and integrity, by maintaining consistency in the actions of faculty and staff. With few exceptions, these are widely distributed and available on the TMCC website.

The Faculty/Staff Handbook contains many policies that help maintain high ethical standards at TMCC. The Institutional Policies section of the handbook contains policies on Non-discrimination, Whistleblower, Human Research Protection, Intellectual Property, Computer Usage, Sexual Harassment, Facilities Usage, Grant Money Procedures, and use of the EEO/AA statement, among others. Given to all new faculty and staff employees, the Faculty/Staff Handbook is also available on the TMCC web site and is revised every year, with changes emailed to all faculty.

The Nevada Faculty Alliance (NFA), an affiliate of the AAUP, has a presence at TMCC, and works well with the upper administration, according to Bill Newhall, President of the TMCC NFA chapter. According to the website, NFA is "dedicated to strengthening the integrity of higher education in Nevada." Title 2 of the Code sanctions collective bargaining every two years, which gives NFA members a legal stake in decisions made regarding tenure, salary, academic freedom, and other faculty rights. The NFA lobbies the Nevada Legislature in support of higher education, benefiting members and non-members of the NFA at TMCC. The current college president and vice presidents are very supportive of what the AAUP and NFA stand for. Currently, there are 20 TMCC academic faculty who are members of the NFA. This is only 15% of the total eligible

TMCC faculty. This low percentage can be attributed to a \$30 monthly membership fee, and a perception that membership is not necessary for fair and ethical treatment at TMCC.

Students

By defining policies and procedures for students to follow, TMCC helps them maintain high ethical standards and integrity. A Student Conduct Policies and Procedures handbook was produced in February 2003, which clearly outlines policies related to student ethics and integrity. This handbook is being revised in 2004/2005.

The Associate Dean of Students serves as a key administrator position actively involved in the development and implementation of TMCC's student conduct policy and procedures. The Associate Dean is proactive in promoting awareness and assistance to the entire campus through training workshops, consultations, orientations, and other communiques.

Written documents are available regarding Student Conduct and Procedures and appear in the student handbook and TMCC's website. These policies are in accordance with the UCCSN Code, title 2, chapter 6. Appendix L of the TMCC catalog outlines student conduct code.

Integrity and high ethics in the academic treatment of students can be seen in TMCC's commitment to place students at appropriate levels in core education classes. In 1997, TMCC adapted ACCUPLACER as a testing tool for students. Used to assess students for placement in Math and English, it is also the official College test to approve financial aid students to establish "ability to benefit" status - that is, as a high school equivalency. Students are asked 17 questions from a large interactive database of 300 questions, with question selection based upon the student's response to the previous questions. As a result, each student receives essentially a different test, since it is based upon their responses to previous questions. Because the test is web-based, it is portable and students can test anywhere they have internet access. After testing, students are sent to the Advisement Center with their printed test results, and on occasion, the Administrative Assistant for the Testing Center provides on the spot advisement.

ACCUPLACER placement tests are based on the item selection algorithm. Every tests starts out with a test question that has been extensively tested for the following three factors: 1) difficulty; 2) discrimination bias; 3) probability of 'correct guessing'. As the student progresses through the test, depending on how well he/she answers the questions, the degree of difficulty of test items goes up or down. Due to the computer-adaptive nature of the ACCUPLACER tests, the program 'zeroes-in' on the student's level of ability in the tested subject, thus providing for a higher accuracy of testing.

ACCUPLACER math tests have diagnostic components. Those separately administered tests identify specific weaknesses a student has. The College (math dept) chose not utilize those tests at this time. The writing portion of the ACCUPLACER also offers a diagnostic interpretation of the score, indicating the areas of strength and weakness in a

composition written by a student. That feature is being currently used for ESL and regular English testing.

The Testing Center and Institutional Research work collaboratively with the departments. Based on the student's scores, the English and Math departments determine placement into the appropriate course. They regularly run tests on this program, by taking a sample of students and giving them a pre- and post-test in the course. The departments then compare the students test scores against their classroom achievement. Ultimately, the final decisions are made by the chair of each department, with input from the Developmental Coordinator and other faculty members.

Information regarding ACCUPLACER is provided to students via the English and Math departmental websites. Information is also available in the Student Handbook, and in brochures and posters at the student center. On the Test portion of Web-Reg, there are explanations of test scores and placement, to assist students in enrolling in the correct class. SIS prevents enrollment in a class for which the student has not achieved the minimum cut scores, thereby preventing students from taking classes they are not ready for, or likely would not succeed in.

The ACCUPLACER testing process demonstrates the integrity and ethical standards TMCC is committed to in order to ensure the academic success of its students in English and Math. Data from studies done at TMCC show that students who take English 090 based on ACCUPLACER scores, do better in English 101.

The integrity of student's rights, as pertaining to the ethical treatment of students, is maintained by the Admissions and Records, and Registrar's Offices at TMCC. A legal basis for ethical practices with respect to students is the U.S. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), which ensures confidentiality of students' education records and restricts disclosure to or access by third parties except as authorized by law. The Admissions and Records Office performs a major role in the promotion and maintenance of FERPA guidelines in order to safeguard student records, confidentiality and rights of privacy.

In accordance with institutional policy and FERPA, Truckee Meadows Community College vigorously protects the privacy of student education records of individual students, such as grades and class schedules without prior written consent of the student. For example, the Director of Admissions and Records has instituted FERPA training available to the entire campus with workshops held monthly. Special trainings are provided during the Welcome Back staff and faculty professional development activities held at the beginning of each academic semester. In addition, various means of communication are utilized in order to inform campus personnel of FERPA regulations including posting on the website, printed documents sent to all staff, e-mail messages, and designated Admissions staff who attend campus meetings and present FERPA information. FERPA policy is displayed on the TMCC webpage. The Director of Admissions and Registrar's office is proposing an on-line FERPA training that will include an accountability process, whereby a faculty/staff member acknowledges having

completed the training and an agreement of acceptance of FERPA policy.

The integrity of student records is also addressed at TMCC by the following policies:

- The “TMCC Privacy Notice for Printed Materials.” is printed in the class schedule and the catalog. This notice provides students with the option of restricting the release of directory information.
- Student workers receive orientation that includes the restrictions and safeguards that protect student confidentiality and recordkeeping.
- Files of student records are secured in locked rooms.
- There is restricted staff access to Student Information System(SIS) and capabilities to make changes/record information.
- Review and oversight by Director is performed to maintain standards in procedures. The role of Assistant Director provides another level of supervisory support and quality control.

Integrity in Admissions Policies and the Registration Process, as pertaining to applicant access, admittance, and enrollment into TMCC classes and programs, is addressed in the following ways:

- Catalog lists all relevant admissions and registration procedures as well as student responsibilities.
- Admissions/registration is available on-line(web-reg). Steps and standards outlined as "registration at a glance" and 8 steps on back of first cover of schedule "Imagine the Possibilities"
- Policies related to course substitution, tuition status, residency re-determination, refunds, and registration adjustment forms are available at the Admissions Office. Students are referred to the appropriate personnel for any needed authorizations.

Institution

Human resource policies ensure the integrity of the college in areas concerned with personnel matters and conditions related to employment, and include the following:

College wide policies:

Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity
Sexual Harassment
Nepotism
Hiring faculty and staff
Personnel records and privacy rights
Procedures for hiring new personnel
Probationary period of employment
Search committees
Salaries, wages and benefits
Safety

- Mission Statement
- Conflict of Interest
- Computer Software licensing
- Computer Usage Guidelines
- Drug Free Workplace
- Political Activity
- Public Meetings
- Sexual Harassment
- Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity
- College Property and Usage Guidelines
- College Archives and Records policy
- Fundraising and Solicitation of Gifts
- Travel

Policies that primarily affect faculty members:

- Academic freedom
- Intellectual property
- Faculty Senate Constitution By-Laws
- Sabbatical Leave, rank and tenure procedures
- Academic position descriptions
- Department chair selection process
- Faculty appraisal and evaluation
- Faculty recruitment guidelines

Policies that affect Classified Staff most directly:

- Constitution and Bylaws of the Classified Staff Council
- Termination of non-academic Staff employees and disciplinary Sanctions
- Classified staff rights and benefits
- Employment grievances
- Overtime (non-exempt personnel)

Human Resources has recently adopted a formal process for hiring. A Search Committee Manual was created in 2003 to make the process more efficient and effective, and to ensure that the highest level of equity and ethics are maintained. According to Marsha Lindekin, Director of Human Resources, all positions are now filled by doing national searches unless the position requires local expertise. To further improve the effectiveness of the office of Human Resources, a new Associate Director position has been approved and will be filled in spring 2005.

The TMCC Diversity Campus Affairs Committee was formed during the Fall semester, 2004. This committee will strive to meet one of our strategic goals at TMCC: Diversity. One of the subcommittees will concentrate on workforce diversity. This subcommittee will receive training so that they can participate, ex-officio, in search/interview committees when faculty and staff are being hired. This will help ensure integrity and ethics within the hiring committees.

The Foundation office at TMCC has guidelines for Gift Reporting, Handling of Funds, and the handling of Foundation Grants. These published guidelines help ensure that integrity and high ethical standards are maintained in these processes. The guidelines are

clearly established, but not widely disseminated through the campus.

Fourteen Internal audits of TMCC have been completed by the University and Community College System of Nevada (UCCSN) Internal Audit Department during the period of July 1, 2000 through June 30, 2004, according to Sandi Cardinal, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Internal Audit and Risk Management. Departments audited include Food Services, FTE, Presidential Exit Audit, Central Services, Construction, Travel, Plant and Facilities, Information Technology Operations, Applications Development, Associated Students, Faculty Workload, and Library. These internal audits help ensure integrity in the operations of these departments at TMCC.

Results of annual financial audits of both Truckee Meadows Community College and the TMCC Foundation by an independent certified public accounting firm show a record of financial integrity. In addition, the UCCSN Internal Audit Department conducts audits of various departments and operations at the college, and the State of Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau initiates audits at the direction of the Legislature. (The 2003 Legislature requested a number of audits be completed and those audits are in process.) Both the college and the Foundation have a record of fiscal compliance with the UCCSN Board of Regents Code and State and Federal laws. Purchasing procedures and the competitive bid process are administered at Business Center North (a business office serving the Northern Nevada UCCSN institutions) rather than by TMCC staff. This assures a high level of integrity and independence from the college. For details and exhibits regarding the audits of the college and the Foundation, see Standard Seven.

Organizations and External Agencies

TMCC works with many external agencies and organizations in the Reno/Sparks/Carson/Tahoe area. There is no tangible evidence to support TMCC's commitment to high ethical standards in its dealings with local agencies and organizations, however there is no evidence to suggest otherwise.

TMCC is committed to serving the local business community's employment needs. One way this is done is through advisory committees, which are formed at the department level for specific programs. There are currently 29 active advisory committees, according to a list compiled by the office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs. These committees serve as a communication conduit, where local business owners can tell departments what they need from graduating students in the program, and the departments can inform the business community about their programs.

There are many policies and procedures in place at TMCC that help define the college as one with high ethical standards and integrity. A large percentage of these have been recently implemented. Because of this relatively short time span, it is difficult to evaluate the integrity of all the policies, and their long term effects. However, some policies are better known than others. For example, policies on sexual harassment are covered clearly in mandatory training classes held each semester, although the mandate is carried out differently by different departments.

Strengths, Weaknesses, and Recommendations

Strengths:

- Creation of Statement of Institutional Values.
- President Ringle a strong proponent of high ethical standards.
- Strong faculty/staff handbook with regard to integrity.
- Demonstrated integrity in the area of student conduct.
- Demonstrated integrity in the area of finances.
- Use of Accuplacer to place students into appropriate classes.
- Accuplacer based placements are subject to review by English and Math departments, humanizing the process, and allowing a level of “appeal”.
- The recent move of the Testing Center under the department of Admissions and Records demonstrates the College's commitment to the continued integrity of the Accuplacer program. Both areas demonstrate similar working and thinking styles, and are committed to moving data quickly into SIS for student access and placement. Additionally, the close physical proximity of the Testing Center to the Student Services Center allows for ease of referral.
- Workshops and training are regularly provided to the campus community on FERPA.
- The Director of Admissions regularly includes discussions of integrity and procedures in staff meetings. The Director emphasizes clear staff responsibilities and limitations(i.e. not doing advisement but making the referral to other professional staff--counselors, advisors, etc.) The Director works closely with academic faculty and administration(ex-officio of Academic Standards and Curriculum committees) and to assure the proper referral back to the authority of Academic Deans, instructors, or administrators regarding any related changes to grades, policy exceptions, or appeals.
- Of significant note since the last Self Study Report, is the position of Associate Dean of Student Services who is charged with specific responsibilities directly related to this area of inquiry. In addition, it appears that the entire TMCC campus community, including academics, student services, the administration, and students, is involved to provide input and effort in the administration of policies of conduct and discipline to assure the fair treatment of students.
- A review of exhibits and discussions with the Associate Dean of Student Services provides evidence of major efforts, established policies and practices to promote and implement institutional integrity in the fair treatment of students, some of which are listed below:
 - Student employment
 - Student financial aid/loans
 - Admissions records access and management
 - FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
 - Grading

- Grade appeal
- Course syllabus
- Student complaints
- Student Conduct and disciplinary procedures

Weaknesses:

- Institutional Values statement has not been widely disseminated.
- Despite the Search Committee Manual, there have been problems involving the breach of confidentiality in some hiring committees.
- Diagnostic information from ACCUPLACER testing is not currently being used by the math department.
- The ACCUPLACER cut-scores might need to be more closely linked with course competencies.
- Some feel insufficient attention has been given to ACCUPLACER reading scores.
- Faculty who serve on tenure and hiring committees may need additional training to serve their committees better.
- Degree Audit Reports (DARS) do not always get processed in a timely manner.

Recommendation

- In order to assure the academic integrity of credits and degree requirements, DARS reports should be processed in a more timely manner for students. The Director of Admissions and Records is in the process of decentralizing work activities in order to lessen the burden of work on a few staff and to produce DARS in a more timely manner.
- Publicize Values Statement and require inclusion in College documents. Require mandatory training for department heads and above in this area.
- TMCC is beginning to take steps to provide additional training for faculty and staff serving on search and interview committees, with the creation of the TMCC Diversity Campus Affairs Committee. Progress should be monitored in this area.

References:

TMCC 2004 Fact Book
Institutional Integrity Design Team Report, July 1, 2001
UCCSN Code, Chapters 1-6
TMCC Administrative manual
TMCC Faculty/Staff Handbook
TMCC Student Conduct Policies and Procedures
Welcome back speech, fall 2004, President Dr. Phil Ringle
Bylaws of the Nevada Faculty Alliance (NFA)
Advisory Committee list 12/04
TMCC Search Committee Manual
Gift Reporting Guidelines
Foundation Grant Guidelines
Handling of Funds Guidelines
TMCC Institutional Integrity Document
TMCC Search Committee Manual
TMCC Campus Climate Survey, August 2004
President Ringle's Evaluation Survey Summary, November 2004
UCCSN Memorandum, From: Sandi Cardinal, Subject: TMCC Self Study, Date: October 5, 2004

9.A.2

The institution regularly evaluates and revises as necessary its policies, procedures, and publications to ensure continuing integrity throughout the institution.

TMCC has grown in the last ten years, with an FTE of 3,594 in 1993 and an FTE of 5,544 in Fall 2003 according to the TMCC 2004 Fact Book. As numerous examples attest, TMCC engages in ongoing evaluation and revision of its policies and procedures as the institution grows and evolves, to maintain a high level of integrity and ethical standards.

Policies, Procedures, and Publications

TMCC developed a comprehensive strategic plan and mission in 1997 in response to suggestions made by the 1995 Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges evaluation report. In 2002, President Dr. Philip Ringle established a Planning Council, with one charge to be examining and updating the TMCC Mission and Strategic Goals to reflect the new president's initiatives. After a process that included campus community input, the new TMCC Mission and Strategic Goals were drafted in 2002, and finalized in March 2004. The Board of Regents is scheduled to vote on the new mission and goals during the October 2004 meeting. The TMCC Mission and Strategic goals are published on the TMCC website at <http://www.tmcc.edu/about/mission.asp>.

The TMCC bylaws were reviewed in 2003-2004 by faculty and administration, and revisions were made through the Faculty Senate in spring 2004, that were subsequently approved by President Ringle and the Board of Regents in 2004. These changes are consistent with TMCC's commitment to serve the community better.

Policy regarding the public dissemination of information was established in 2002-2003 by the Publication and Public Information Office (PPIO). Many of these policies are considered too rigid for a Community College by some of the faculty and staff (see 9.A.3). Information is available on the TMCC web site regarding proper use of the TMCC logo, grammar and spelling styles (Associated Press Stylebook, and the Merriam-Webster Dictionary), and content requirements, such as the use of the Equal Employment Opportunity/ Affirmative Action statement.

Sexual harassment training is done for all full time TMCC employees every year, and the policies related to sexual harassment, which is in the Faculty/Staff handbook, the Part Time Faculty Handbook, and on the TMCC website, are revised or updated regularly.

The Faculty/Staff Handbook, which is given to all new faculty and staff employees, contains many policies that help maintain high ethical standards at TMCC. The Institutional Policies section of the handbook contains policies on Non-discrimination, Whistleblower, Human Research Protection, Intellectual Property, Computer Usage, Sexual Harassment, Facilities Usage, Grant Money Procedures, and use of the EEO/AA statement, among others. The Faculty/Staff handbook is revised every semester, according to Marsha Lindeken, director of human resources. Changes are emailed to all faculty and staff every semester. The handbook is also available as a hard copy, and it can

be downloaded from the TMCC website at http://www.tmcc.edu/faculty_staff.asp.

The Part Time Faculty handbook is also revised every year, and is available to all part time faculty as a hard copy or as a download from the TMCC website at <http://www.tmcc.edu/ptf/handbook.asp>.

A Student Conduct Policy and Procedures manual was completed and implemented in February 2003, with input and support from faculty, staff, administration, and the ASTM. The manual covers Misconduct and Disciplinary Procedure. The manual is available both on the TMCC website at http://www.tmcc.edu/faculty_staff.asp, and as a hard copy in the human resources office.

The Sabbatical policy was evaluated and revised by the Professional Standards sub-committee of the Faculty Senate in spring 2004, to address perceived inequities in the selection process.

Policy for funding of Professional Development and Travel was evaluated and revised by the VPAA in spring 2004, with changes taking effect in fall 2004, in an attempt to make professional development more accessible to faculty, and to make the distribution of funds more equitable.

The policy for probationary tenure and the required documentation for applying for tenure was evaluated by the Professional Standards sub-committee of the Faculty Senate in 2003-2004. Working with the Faculty Senate, the VPAA used this information to create a new set of guidelines for tenure track faculty. The guidelines will more clearly standardize the process for all tenure track faculty, and increase consistency and fairness in the application process across all divisions at TMCC.

Last revised in July 2001, the Administrative Manual has not had a major revision in five years, and is in need of further revision to reflect the evolution of the institution. The task of revisiting the manual was assigned to faculty member Armida Fruzzetti, in fall 2004. It should be revised in the spring 2005 semester.

The class evaluation form used by students to evaluate a class was revised through the Faculty Senate in fall 2003 and spring 2004, and was implemented in spring 2004. This will increase consistency and integrity in the evaluation process, as previous forms were not standardized. The revised form is now accepted as the one for all to use.

A policy on textbook usage is currently being created by the Professional Standards sub-committee of the Faculty Senate. Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 25 of the UCCSN code outlines policy for textbook selection, and specifies each institution shall develop “an approved statement of professional and ethical guidelines relative to the selection of textbooks or other instructional materials.” This had not been done until now.

Many of the policies in place at TMCC were implemented or revised within the current president’s administration, which started in Fall 2002. However, some strengths and weaknesses in the evaluation and revision of policies at TMCC can be surmised. As for strengths, according to the Campus Climate Survey done at TMCC published in August

2004, 73% of respondents agree that TMCC has well defined goals for the future, this compared to 39% in 2002. Concerning weaknesses, the survey also indicated some do not feel they have a say in the evaluation or revision of policies that affect them. For example, Table 12 of page 68 concerning “Open Ended Comments related to Missions,” one response was, “The College is clearly working to redefine the college mission and include as many viewpoints as possible. A problem is that not all faculties are participating.”

Strengths:

- Strong mission statement that sets a tone of integrity, that is widely disseminated.
- Creation of a search committee manual to ensure consistency in hiring.

Weaknesses:

- Administrative Manual has not been revised in five years, but is being done now.
- Search committees still do not adhere to published policies in all cases.

Recommendations:

- Strong push towards revision of Administrative Manual.
- Create guidelines for textbook selection
- Require mandatory training for department heads and above in search committee/hiring policies.

References:

TMCC Mission Statement and Strategic Goals
TMCC Strategic Plan
UCCSN Bylaws
TMCC Faculty/Staff Handbook
TMCC Part Time Faculty Handbook
TMCC Student Conduct Policies and Procedures
Tenure Guidelines Document
TMCC Administrative Manual
TMCC Website, PPIO section
TMCC Institutional Integrity Document
TMCC Search Committee Manual
Faculty senate minutes spring 2004
TMCC Survey on Campus Climate, August 2004
UCCSN Code, Title 4, Section 14, Chapter 25

9.A.3

The institution represents itself accurately and consistently to its constituencies, the public, and prospective students through its catalogs, publications, and official statements.

TMCC's mission statement calls for a supportive, intellectually and culturally dynamic environment. Accurate and consistent representation of the institution through catalogs, publications and official statements is one way TMCC actively strives to meet this goal.

The Public Information Office provides a variety of both internal and external communication methods to accurately inform campus personnel and community constituencies. The PIO is committed to both quality and consistency in the development of policies and in the monitoring of campus-wide practices.

On May 24, 2004 members of the Standard 9 committee met with Paula Lee Hobson, Director, and Kyle Dalpe, Assistant Director of the Public Information Office. Based upon our discussion and the information provided, the Public Information Office and staff implement policies and procedures in order to support and advance institutional integrity by:

- Providing accessibility of all PIO related documents and policies via the PIO web page.
- Maintaining a quality assurance process that includes a review function whereby consistency and standards of written, visual, and media communication and correspondence.
- Referencing of and adherence to policies as established through the TMCC administrative manual.
- Providing consultation and assistance to TMCC departments and personnel in the design, editing, and review of printed promotional materials, student recruitment and information documents, and other marketing tools to promote accurate and consistent representation of the College.
- Providing services to college personnel in the areas of: editing and proofing, media coaching, development of news announcements, an experts directory, news conferences and media interviews, responses to reporters, and photography.
- Providing oversight and a review process to ensure the professional quality of TMCC publications adhere to the requirements of formats, logo display, and statements of equal opportunity/affirmative action and equal access(ADA).
- Producing internal and external communication methods in order to accurately and regularly inform campus personnel and community constituencies that include the following:

External communications and publications

PPIO writes, designs, edits and provides print coordination for all college publications that are intended for students and the community.

- TMCC administrative Web page content are reviewed for accuracy, grammar and targeted appeal to audience(s).
- TMCC Trends is a quarterly newsletter for community leaders and donors.
- Class schedules are prepared for fall, spring and summer semesters.
- The annual course catalog explains TMCC degree and certificate programs and college policies.
- Brochures, flyers, posters, fact sheets, etc. promote TMCC programs.
- Print, radio and television advertisements are part of the marketing mix for college programs and image enhancement.

Internal communications

- TMCC This Week, the electronic newsletter, is housed on TMCC's Web site for faculty and staff.
- TMCC faculty and staff directory lists the name, title, address, telephone and fax numbers of college employees.

Strengths

- The Public Information Office reflects a strong commitment to institutional integrity as demonstrated in its proactive approach in developing policies and monitoring campus-wide practices to assure standards of quality and consistency in image and public relations.
- The PIO utilizes various methods to communicate and assist all constituencies in understanding policies and provides technical assistance to assure compliance.
- PPIO won four awards from the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations in 2004.

Weaknesses:

- PPIO Policies under “College Styles and Usage” on the TMCC website need to be updated, are not well known to many in the TMCC community. This can result in frustration and wasted time when published documents go through the approval process at PPIO.
- Some of the TMCC logo usage rules seem unnecessarily rigid and are not consistently followed.
- Some departments still produce printed and electronic media that do not comply with policy, either through ignorance of the rules, or disagreement with them.
- Faculty in some departments that teach transfer classes feel transfer classes are not well represented in press releases and other published promotional material.

Recommendations:

- Incorporation of policy statements into Computer Usage Agreements for electronic media, and mandatory training for department heads and higher regarding print media.
- Review and update PPIO publication policies on the TMCC website, based on feedback from a campus wide survey.

References

TMCC Mission Statement and Strategic Goals
TMCC Strategic Plan
UCCSN Bylaws
TMCC Faculty/Staff Handbook
TMCC Part Time Faculty Handbook
TMCC Student Conduct Policies and Procedures
TMCC Administrative Manual
TMCC Website, PPIO section
TMCC Institutional Integrity Document
Paula Hobson, Director Public Information Office
Kyle Dalpe, Assistant Director Public Information Office
Marsha Lindekin, Director Human Resources
Georgia Pullen, Associate Dean of Student Services

9.A.4

Conflict of Interest: Institutional policy defines and prohibits conflict of interest on the part of governing board members, administrators, faculty, and staff.

Conflict of interest policies appear throughout the handbooks, codes of conduct and regulations of the UCCSN system. Intended to help maintain a high ethical standard for all those who work for the system, many of these policies are incorporated into the TMCC bylaws and define TMCC policy. The TMCC Faculty/Staff Handbook refers to conflict of interest under “Faculty Employment” pg. 10. This policy is taken from the identical UCCSN Code – General Business Management, Title 4, Chapter 10, Section 7. The main emphasis of the policy is stated:

*In addition to such **conflicts of interest** prohibited by law, it shall also be prohibited for a member of the Board of Regents or an employee of the University and Community College System of Nevada: (1) to become a contractor or a vendor for the purchase of supplies, equipment, services and construction under any contract or purchase order of any kind authorized by the University and Community College System of Nevada under the provisions of this chapter, or (2) to be interested, directly or indirectly, through any member of a Regent's or employee's household, as defined by NRS 281.434, or through any business entity in which the Regent or employee has a financial interest, in any kind of contract or purchase order so authorized by the receipt of any commission, profit or compensation of any kind. (B/R 6/91)*

Conflict of interest is also referenced in the TMCC Faculty/Staff Handbook under Institutional Policies – “Nepotism” pg. 29 taken directly from the UCCSN Code – Professional Staff, Title 4, Chapter 3, Section 5.

*1. It is the policy of the University and Community College System of Nevada that none of its employees or officers shall engage in any activities that place them in a **conflict of interest** between their official activities and any other interest or obligation. **Conflict of interest** requires all employees and officers to disqualify themselves from participating in a decision when a financial or personal interest is present. (B/R 10/02)*

Also, stated in the Board of Regents Handbook – Title 4, Chapter 1, Section 3, #2 – Statutory and Policy Prohibitions for Members of the Board of Regents:

*1. Regents are subject to the code of ethical standards of the State of Nevada (NRS 281.481 – 281.671) promulgated to govern the conduct of public officers and employees. These sections of the NRS include, but are not limited to, provisions related to acceptance of gifts and services (NRS 281.481), voting (281.501), bidding on contracts (281.505), and honorariums (281.553). Regents are also subject to certain additional **conflict of interest** provisions contained in other sections of the Nevada Revised Statutes and in this Handbook.*

- a. *Nevada Revised Statutes 396.122 prohibits a member of the Board of Regents from being interested, directly or indirectly, as principal, partner, agent or otherwise, in any contract or expenditure created by the Board of Regents, or in the profits or results thereof.*
 - b. *Board policy related to Regents' **conflicts of interest** concerning the purchase of supplies, equipment, services, and construction under any contract or purchase order is stated in Title 4, Chapter 10, Section 1(7).*
 - c. *Board policy related to Regents' **conflicts of interest** concerning management of investment accounts is stated in Title 4, Chapter 10, Section 5(5).*
 - d. *Board policy related to Regents' **conflicts of interest** concerning nepotism is stated in Title 4, Chapter 3, Section 5. (B/R 12/02)*
2. *In order to demonstrate compliance with statutory provisions contained in the Nevada Revised Statutes and with Board policies, members of the Board of Regents shall complete an annual disclosure statement regarding contractual, employment, family, financial, and outside activities that might create a **conflict of interest**. The annual disclosure statements will be filed with the Chief Administrative Officer and are subject to state records retention policies. (B/R 12/02)*

Specific conflicts of interest are pointed out in the UCCSN Code – Professional Staff, Title 4, Chapter 3, Section 7 – Compensated Outside Professional Services. This policy has been revised as recently as March 2004. The revised version appears in the Board of Regents Handbook. The old version is stated first in italics and the revision – second.

Compensated Outside Professional Services

Outside professional or scholarly service as contemplated by this section shall not interfere with the performance of the academic duties of any faculty member.

Revision: Outside professional or scholarly service as contemplated by this section shall not interfere with the performance of the academic duties of any faculty member. **Such service shall occupy no more than one day's equivalent time per week (20%), exclusive of evenings, weekends, and holidays.**

No faculty member may undertake outside professional or scholarly service that would result in a conflict of interest with his or her assigned duties. Conflict of interest means any outside activity or interest that may adversely affect, compromise, or be incompatible with the obligations of an employee to the institution or to widely recognized professional norms.

A faculty member may not assist any person for a fee or other compensation in obtaining a contract, claim, license, or other economic benefit from the University and Community College System of Nevada. A faculty member may not perform an official act that directly benefits a business or other undertaking in which he or she either has a substantial financial interest or is engaged as counsel, consultant, representative, agent, director, or officer.

A faculty member may make a general announcement of his availability as a consultant but may not solicit consulting assignments.

Revision: Faculty members may make a general announcement of **their** availability as consultants but may not solicit consulting assignments.

A faculty member working independently on an outside-compensated contract shall not use University facilities, equipment or personnel unless such use is authorized by his Dean. No such use shall be permitted unless proper consideration is made thereof. (B/R 10/61)

Revision: **Faculty members performing compensated outside professional or scholarly service are subject to the Board policy on personal use of System property or resources.**

Although not stated as specific conflicts of interest, UCCSN Code – General Business Management, Title 4, Chapter 10, #3 – Naming of Buildings, implies avoiding conflict of interest.

Naming of Buildings.

b. The naming of a building, room, part of building, or public space shall not be considered under the following conditions, if it is to be named after a person or persons:

- *The person is currently employed by the University and Community College System of Nevada.*
- *The person is currently serving on the Board of Regents.*
- *The person is an elected public official (Through January 2003, each UCCSN institution shall be allowed one exception to the prohibition concerning elected public officials.) (B/R 3/02)*

In March of 2004 a motion was passed in faculty senate to incorporate a textbook policy into the TMCC Faculty and Staff Handbook. This policy has not yet been placed in the Handbook.

Handbook Statement (DRAFT)

Textbook selection is the responsibility of faculty. Textbooks should contain current, relevant information for the course, as well as appropriate assignments and supplementary material when applicable. Textbooks should help faculty accomplish the educational objectives of a course. Faculty should exercise their expertise and professional judgment when selecting textbooks, and carefully consider the academic, professional, and ethical implications of criteria used in textbook selections.

To that end, each UCCSN institution shall develop an approved statement of professional and ethical guidelines relative to the selection of textbooks or other instructional materials. Such guidelines shall address relationships with publishers or other providers, selection of one's authored text for instructional use, and shall address the desirability of minimizing costs to students when this can be accomplished without compromising academic standards and academic freedom.

Although not stated as specific conflicts of interest, UCCSN Code – General Business Management, Title 4, Chapter 10, #3 – Naming of Buildings, implies avoiding conflict of interest.

Naming of Buildings.

b. The naming of a building, room, part of building, or public space shall not be considered under the following conditions, if it is to be named after a person or persons:

- *The person is currently employed by the University and Community College System of Nevada.*
- *The person is currently serving on the Board of Regents.*
- *The person is an elected public official (Through January 2003, each UCCSN institution shall be allowed one exception to the prohibition concerning elected public officials.) (B/R 3/02)*

Current status:

- Conflict of interest policies have constantly been added to the UCCSN Code since 1961 and more recently in 2004. They appear sporadically throughout the Code and are borrowed by the individual colleges for their handbooks. Some revisions are currently underway for the Code.

Strengths:

- The conflict of interest policies are clearly stated and are present where they can easily be located. The TMCC website and handbooks both make references to conflict of interest policies. Staff appear to be aware of conflict of interest policies.

Weaknesses:

- The idea of conflict of interest is largely dependent on the integrity of the individual. This is a difficult area to regulate, however must be stated. The policies of conflict of interest are easy to overlook in the vast array of documentation. It seems that the conflict of interest policies are not consistent from one institution to the next.

Recommendations:

- The sporadic entries throughout the UCCSN Code might best be placed under one comprehensive policy governing the entire system with enough emphasis to keep it from being overlooked. The UCCSN Code seems to dictate many of the written policies on conflict of interest. It would seem logical to place any comprehensive overall policy in the UCCSN Code then disseminate to the institutions, policy TMCC could only recommend.

Timelines:

- A single comprehensive policy might be established in a short period of time simply by combining all references in one revision to the UCCSN Code. Administrative manuals would then have to be revised, taking one year for each step.

9.A.5

The institution demonstrates through its policies and practices, its commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge consistent with the institution's mission and goals.

Two years ago, in his fall 2002 kick-off speech, President Ringle expressed his vision for TMCC by referring to six principles of a strong campus community proposed by Earnest Boyer in 1990. President Ringle wanted TMCC to be an institution that reinforced these six principles. Two years later in his fall 2004 kick-off speech, President Ringle referred to them again, and felt we were making good progress in that direction. Two of these six principles express a strong commitment to the pursuit of academic freedom: "It is an open place where freedom of expression is protected and civility affirmed, and "It is a just community where sacredness of the person is honored and where diversity is aggressively pursued"

The TMCC college community demonstrates its commitment to academic freedom throughout many documents and statements. Academic freedom and tenure are essential for the protection of the rights of the teacher. TMCC's Tenure Chair and Committee Responsibility Handbook (Sept. 2003) has clarified goals and given structured guidelines for teachers as they work toward tenured status.

The college also realizes that academic freedom is fundamental for our students as well as faculty: *"TMCC has an obligation to maintain conditions under which the work of the college can go forward freely, in accordance with the highest standards of quality, institutional integrity and freedom of expression."* (Student Handbook, page 14)

Other statements on academic freedom for students are clearly stated in the TMCC Catalog (2004 – 2005) (see Appendix L, Appendix N, and Appendix Q).

The college's mission statement and strategic goals also provide insight into the importance placed on academic freedom for our students: *"To foster an academic community that welcomes the opportunity to experience, examine and learn from diverse physical, cultural and ideological backgrounds while nurturing mutual respect."* (strategic goal #7)

Instructors at TMCC are expected and encouraged to promote freedom of expression, discussion, and inquiry in their classes. The following statement, taken from the TMCC Faculty Staff Handbook (September 2, 2004), clearly states the College's commitment to a free pursuit of truth and knowledge as stated in Title 2, Chapter 2 of the UCCSN Code:

Academic Freedom

"Academic freedom is essential to these purposes and is applicable to both teaching and research. Freedom in teaching is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student in learning. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth and knowledge. A member of the faculty has freedom and an

obligation, in the classroom or in research, to discuss and pursue the faculty member's subject with candor and integrity, even when the subject requires consideration of topics which may be politically, socially or scientifically controversial. In order to insure the freedom to seek and profess truth and knowledge, as stated in Section 2.3 of the UCCSN Code the faculty member shall not be subjected to censorship or discipline by the University of Nevada on grounds that the faculty member has expressed opinions or views which are controversial, unpopular or contrary to the attitudes of the University of Nevada or the community. (UCCSN Code, Title 2, Chapter 2, Section 2.1)

The TMCC Institutional Integrity document contains TMCC's policy on Academic Freedom: "Academic Freedom. Every person within the academic community has the right to freedom of inquiry, freedom of opinion, and freedom of speech. Administrators recognize their special duty to protect these freedoms for faculty and students. Faculty members support the academic freedom of students."

According to our current NFA president, the TMCC administration is very supportive of the collective bargaining contract between UCCSN and TMCC Chapter of the Nevada Faculty Alliance. The Nevada Faculty Alliance (NFA) is an affiliate of AAUP (American Association of University Professors).

The AAUP has historically been the watchdog and protector of academic freedom, shared governance, and tenure. (1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure with 1970 Interpretive Comments)

Our current administration agrees with and abides by the AAUP policies on academic freedom, tenure, and due process as stated in the AAUP Policy Documents and Reports, 9th Edition. (TMCC Tenure Chair and Committee Responsibilities, Sept. 2003)

In the spring semester of 2004, a project was conducted to provide a look at the campus climate at TMCC. Major highlights related to academic freedom are:

- 60% of respondents agree that TMCC's atmosphere encourages the open expression of ideas, this compared to only 48% in 2002.
- 74% agree that TMCC provides a climate that is sensitive to diversity.

TMCC's commitment to academic freedom and integrity remain firm as we continue to expand our programs, courses and physical resources.

"I believe we continually affirm and recognize academic integrity as a core institutional value." "Learning what is true in order to do what is right sums up both the student's chief duty and our own." TMCC President Ringle Fall Kick- Off Speech

Strengths

- TMCC's firm commitment to high ethical standard is demonstrated in its well-defined set of statements and documents that articulate a clear commitment to academic freedom and personal and academic integrity.

- Faculty and students' academic and personal freedom is respected and protected. The college clearly states students' rights and responsibilities in the catalog and the Student Handbook.
- TMCC has worked to clarify the procedures and responsibilities of tenure committees.
- The college has developed a strong mission statement and prides itself in the integrity of its core principles.

Weaknesses

- The TMCC Climate Survey show 60% of respondents agrees that TMCC's atmosphere encourages the open expression of ideas. This shows improvement compared to only 48% in 2002 but there is clearly room for improvement.

Recommendations

- Administrators, faculty and students need to be reminded of their rights and responsibilities annually.

References:

TMCC President Ringle Fall Kick-Off Speech – August 23, (2004)
Student Handbook
TMCC Catalog (2004 – 2005)
AAUP Policy Documents and Reports, 9th Edition.
TMCC Tenure Chair and Committee Responsibilities, Sept. 2003
TMCC Institutional Integrity document
UCCSN Code
Climate Survey
TMCC Mission and Strategic Goals