

Institutional Integrity (Policy 9.1)

TMCC has explicitly stated its commitment to the pursuit of truth and its communication to others in its Mission Statement. The Mission Statement is, in effect, a contract with students, faculty, and staff. By committing to “provid[ing] access for lifelong learning opportunities to improve the quality of life for our diverse community,” TMCC establishes a larger social contract with the community, state, and country (*Strategic Planning*, insert).

The management of TMCC’s affairs is carried out with the realization that every action must be seen through the lens of student support. This consistent focus is the essence of TMCC’s approach to achieving a culture based upon institutional integrity and ethical conduct. Indeed, in his fall 2004 welcome back address, President Ringle said that “learning what is true in order to do what is right sums up both the students’ chief duty and our own” (2004 President’s address).

As an institution of higher learning, TMCC strives to act with integrity and high ethical standards at every level. Integrity and high ethical standards are derived not only from clearly communicated responsibilities and accountability but also from an atmosphere of diversity, open communication, and respect. The grassroots participation in the Planning Council, which resulted in the *Strategic Planning* document, demonstrates TMCC’s commitment inclusive dialogue in articulating both short- and long-term goals, including the College’s Mission Statement. The ways in which TMCC has begun addressing issues with search committees, the tenure process, the faculty evaluation process, the

examination of retention issues and how they play out in the admission and placement of students, the examination of the general education curriculum, and the ability of the faculty to accept outcomes and assessment work as an outgrowth, rather than a challenge to, academic freedom, and the recognition by administrators, faculty, and staff that resources are the College's--all these efforts demonstrate not only a philosophical alignment with the concept of operating with integrity, but also real, measurable efforts informed by this principle.

TMCC's increasingly open atmosphere supports intellectual freedom, including the freedom to explore knowledge from various vantage points and to support autonomy and freedom in the pursuit of knowledge. Like any institution of higher learning, there are boundaries: classes must meet internal, and often external, standards; and there are codes of conduct for faculty, students, and staff. However, within these boundaries, faculty members can exercise, with an expectation of freedom, both their responsibility to present facts and ideas and their obligation to promote a spirit of critical inquiry so that students feel free to question and think about the uses and meaning of data even as they rethink their own assumptions.

TMCC does not operate under any conditions of special interest; nor does it affiliate itself with any political party or religion. As a public institution of higher learning in the State of Nevada, it is ultimately accountable to the public and to the students who come for the integrity of the educational experience. Faculty, staff, and students at TMCC have the remarkable opportunity to participate in this quest for knowledge, whether it is in the

classroom or in a College or even a UCCSN committee. Students and faculty at TMCC engage in a collaborative effort to move forward together in their pursuit of knowledge; administrators and staff are likewise engaged. The implicit, and sometimes explicit, recognition of the principles of institutional integrity and ethical conduct required for such an endeavor takes place routinely wherever and whenever members of the college community gather. This, ultimately, is the mark of a conscious institution with a sense of shared goals and direction.