

## **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.*

### **Summary**

TMCC's commitment to high ethical standards and integrity is underscored by its mission statement, the UCCSN code, policies in the administrative manual, policies in the faculty/staff handbook, policies in other published documents, and in the attitudes and actions of President Dr. Philip Ringle, as well as the vice presidents, deans, faculty, staff, management, and its students. TMCC as a whole demonstrates a high degree of integrity. Much of this can be attributed to the new leadership team and their efforts to promote a high degree of integrity, ethics, professionalism and communication.

Institutional Integrity was not defined as a separate component in the 1995 accreditation, however, in response to the 2000 five-year review, a Statement of Institutional Values was adopted by TMCC in 2001, and many policies in place now reflect the high level of integrity and ethics as addressed in that document.

The rapid growth of TMCC in the past ten years, and in particular the past five years, has necessitated constant evaluation, revision and creation of policy. TMCC as a whole has done an admirable job of maintaining and improving integrity and high ethical standards, through its policies and procedures, during this growth period.

### **1. Major Findings**

- Many policies and procedures exist to maintain a high level of integrity and ethical standards.
- Policies and procedures are well defined and revised regularly.
- Commitment to high ethical standards and integrity is demonstrated by the actions of President Ringle.
- TMCC Survey on Campus Climate and President's Evaluation Survey were both very positive on ethics and integrity.
- Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs, Finance and Administration, and Student Services demonstrate integrity and provide strong leadership and modeling.
- Newly created position of Vice President of Student Services will help ensure integrity in the treatment of students.
- Newly created position of Director of Equity and Diversity should help ensure integrity and equity in matters of diversity.
- Accuplacer testing tool is used to ensure TMCC's commitment to place students at the appropriate levels in core education classes.
- TMCC demonstrates vigorous protection of student privacy in accordance with FERPA regulations.

- Sexual Harassment training is given to employees annually.
- A new Search Committee Manual helps ensure that a proper formal process for hiring takes place.
- TMCC administration is supportive of the collective bargaining contract between the UCCSN and TMCC Chapter of the Nevada Faculty Alliance (NFA).
- Current administration agrees with and abides by the AAUP policies on academic freedom, tenure and due process.
- Campus Climate survey reflects an improvement with regard to the open expression of ideas at TMCC.
- The new Vice President of Student Services has promoted the idea to the Associated Students of TMCC (ASTM) of developing an "Integrity Oath."

## **2. Relationship of findings to TMCC Mission and Goals**

The Planning Council has been involved in a major strategic planning effort since fall 2002. Members worked in formulating the TMCC mission statement and identified seven initiatives with goal statements. The entire college community was given the opportunity for input and consensus to promote inclusiveness and diversity of opinion.

These findings demonstrate TMCC's commitment to integrity and high ethical standards, through its mission statement and goals, to create a supportive, intellectually and culturally dynamic community. Integrity is addressed in the goals of Academic Excellence, Diversity, Finance and Institutional Effectiveness, Strategic Partnerships, and a Welcoming and Supportive Environment.

## **3. Strengths**

- The college has developed a strong mission statement and prides itself in the integrity of its core principles.
- 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.
- Human Resources policies and statements help ensure the integrity of the college in areas concerned with personnel matters and conditions related to employment.
- There have been significant strides in defining and ensuring academic freedom for TMCC faculty.
- Conflict of interest is addressed in the UCCSN Code, the Board of Regents Handbook, and the TMCC Faculty and Staff Handbook. This policy has been revised as recently as March 2004. It is evident in the numerous policies and procedures related to conflict of interest that Truckee Meadows Community College promotes an institutional mandate that defines and prohibits conflict of interest. The conflict of interest policies are clearly stated and are present where they can easily be located. Faculty and staff appear to be aware of conflict of interest policies.

- An academic integrity policy written by the Vice President of Academic Affairs Jowel Laguerre and the Vice President of Student Services Juanita Chrysanthou is currently under review by the Faculty Senate.
- TMCC demonstrates a strong commitment to serving community employment needs through its 29 advisory committees.
- President Ringle a strong proponent of high ethical standards.
- Demonstrated integrity in the area of student affairs.
- 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”.
- 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.
- 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.

#### **4. Weaknesses/Recommendations**

- One of challenges TMCC faces is how to improve communication and promote active involvement of the TMCC campus in reviewing and understanding of policies procedures, and publications.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.