

**POLICY ON FACULTY PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

(Supercedes University Policy Statement 00-07)

This revised policy was recommended by Academic Senate on February 8, 2007 and approved by the President on March 8, 2007.

Section I of this policy is adapted from the "Statement on Professional Ethics" of the American Association of University Professors that was adopted by the Association's Council in 1987 and endorsed by the Seventy-third Annual Meeting. For purposes of this document, the term professor refers to any Unit 3 employee.

**INTRODUCTION**

Membership in the academic profession carries with it special responsibilities. This policy reaffirms these responsibilities, providing guidance to professors in such matters as their utterances as citizens, the exercise of their responsibilities to students and colleagues, and their conduct when undertaking sponsored research. Specifically, it sets forth those general standards that serve as a reminder of the variety of responsibilities assumed by all members of the profession.

In the enforcement of ethical standards, the academic profession differs from those of law and medicine, whose associations act to ensure the integrity of members engaged in private practice. In the academic profession the individual institution of higher learning provides this assurance and so should normally handle questions concerning propriety of conduct within its own framework by reference to a faculty group. If an alleged offense is deemed sufficiently serious to raise the possibility of adverse action, the procedures should be in accordance with the CSU-CFA Collective Bargaining Agreement.

**I. STATEMENT ON PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

- A. Professors, guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge, recognize the special responsibilities placed upon them. Their primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and to state the truth as they see it. To this end professors devote their energies to developing and improving their scholarly competence. They accept the obligations to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge. They practice intellectual honesty. Although professors may follow subsidiary interests, these interests must never seriously hamper or compromise their freedom of inquiry.
- B. As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Professors make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from them. They protect their academic freedom.
- C. As colleagues, professors have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. Professors do not discriminate against or harass colleagues. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates. In the exchange of criticism and ideas professors show due respect for the opinions of others. Professors acknowledge academic debt and strive to be objective in their professional judgment of colleagues. Professors accept their share of faculty responsibilities for the governance of their institution.
- D. As members of an academic institution, professors seek above all to be effective teachers and scholars. Although professors observe the stated regulations of the institution, provided the regulations do not contravene academic freedom, they maintain their right to criticize and seek revision. Professors give due regard to their paramount responsibilities within their institution in determining the amount and character of work done outside it. When considering the interruption or termination of their service, professors recognize the effect of their decision upon the program of the institution and give due notice of their intentions.

- E. As members of their community, professors have the rights and obligations of other citizens. Professors measure the urgency of these obligations in the light of their responsibilities to their subject, to their students, to their profession, and to their institution. When they speak or act as private persons they avoid creating the impression of speaking or acting for their college or university. As citizens engaged in a profession that depends upon freedom for its health and integrity, professors have a particular obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public understanding of actions taken.

## II. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

The fundamental purpose of a statement of professional responsibility is to establish a guide to responsible performance that is consistent with the highest ideals of the academic profession. When cases of gross disregard for principles of professional responsibility occur, members of the university community have both a right and a duty to call the lapse to the attention of the individual concerned and to expect that the irresponsible behavior will be discontinued.

If the complaint alleges any type of discrimination, including sexual harassment, or any other conduct potentially covered by the Policy on Discrimination, Including Sexual Harassment, and Procedures for Complaint Resolution (PS 98-09), the complaint must be referred to the Discrimination Complaint Resolution Officer, as identified in PS 98-09, and no further action should be taken under this policy.

### A. Informal Resolution

1. Informal resolution is always preferable. When a member of the university community questions the professional integrity and/or behavior of a faculty member, every effort should be made, by consulting with the principals involved, to determine if an informal solution can be achieved at the department and/or college level.

### B. Formal Resolution

1. If a breach of professional responsibility is alleged which cannot be or is not adequately handled informally, any involved party may refer the matter to the Chair of the Panel on Professional Responsibility (see Section III.A).
2. As quickly as may be feasible and in accordance with the process described in Section III.B, a Committee of the Panel on Professional Responsibility should begin an inquiry into the facts of any case it is asked to investigate. The committee shall immediately notify the principals involved and the Vice President for Academic Affairs that an investigation is to be conducted. If the University intends to conduct an investigation which may lead to a formal notice of disciplinary action, the Vice President for Academic Affairs shall so notify the committee and the committee shall take no further action.
3. The committee shall work informally and shall keep only those notes and records that are needed for their own purposes. These records, as well as any recommendations the committee makes, shall be confidential.
4. Alternative Courses of Action
  - a. The committee may, at any time, discontinue the inquiry because the facts do not provide sufficient evidence to support the allegations. In such a case, the committee shall report its reasons for discontinuing the inquiry to the principals involved.
  - b. If the committee carries its inquiry to completion, it must determine whether or not the evidence supports the allegations, and report to the principals involved.
  - c. Within ten (10) days of receipt of the report, any party to the dispute may submit a written response to the committee, which shall be attached to all copies of the report.
  - d. If the finding is that a serious breach of professional responsibility has occurred then a copy of the committee's final report, along with supporting documentation, shall be forwarded to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for possible action and/or inclusion of the report in the personnel file.
5. In all cases, any original documentation obtained in the course of the investigation shall be returned to its original source. All other records of the investigation shall be destroyed.

### III. PANEL ON PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND INVESTIGATING COMMITTEES

- A. A University Panel on Professional Responsibility shall be established annually. It shall be composed of twenty (20) full-time, tenured faculty.
1. The Academic Senate Nominating Committee shall nominate faculty to serve on the Panel. Nominations shall be subject to approval by the Academic Senate.
  2. Nominees shall be selected equitably from the Colleges, Library Services, and the Student Affairs Division Unit Three membership, with special attention to the high regard in which they are held by the academic community.
  3. The members shall serve staggered three-year terms.
  4. One member of the Panel shall be appointed Chair by the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate and shall convene Committees of the Panel.
  5. Three faculty members from the Panel on Professional Responsibility shall serve on the University Hearing Committee established in accordance with University Policy Statement, 07-01, Student Grievance Policy, if required.
- B. When it is necessary to establish a Committee of the Panel on Professional Responsibility, as described in Section I.A.2 of this policy, three faculty members from the Panel who are not in the departments of those involved in the allegations, have had no involvement in the dispute and who are mutually acceptable to the principals involved, shall be empowered to function as a Committee to conduct an informal investigation of the allegations, employing whatever procedures it deems appropriate for the particular case. If it is impossible to find three members by mutual consent, then a random selection procedure shall be used, from among those Panel members not in the College(s) of those involved, with challenge possible only for cause, as determined by the Chair of the Panel.
- C. Upon request of a member of the university community, the Panel Chair may convene a Committee to give advisory opinions as to contemplated conduct; such opinions shall be transmitted to the principals involved in writing.

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**EFFECTIVE: Fall 2007**