

Coast Community College District
BOARD POLICY
Chapter 2
Board of Trustees

BP 2715 Code of Ethics for Members of the Board of Trustees

References:

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges Standards 4.4, 4.6

PREFACE

As elected representatives of the community, members of the Board have been granted a position of “trusteeship” over the District and its three Colleges. Trustees and governing boards have the responsibility to be fair, legal, ethical, and accountable. Trustees shall be independent, impartial, and responsible in their judgment and actions in the governance of the District. Trustees, including the Student Trustee, shall conduct themselves in an ethical manner that does not present even the appearance of a conflict of interest. Trustees shall promote and maintain good relations with other Board members in a spirit of cooperation.

TRUSTEE STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

In support of effective community college governance, the Board believes:

- That it derives its authority from the community and that it must always act as an advocate on behalf of the entire community;
- That it strives to support diversity in hiring and employment to reflect the community it serves;
- That it must clearly define and articulate its role;
- That it is responsible for creating and maintaining a spirit of true cooperation and a mutually supportive relationship with its Chancellor;
- That it always strives to differentiate between external and internal processes in the exercise of its authority;
- That Trustees should engage in a regular and ongoing process of in-service training and continuous improvement;
- That Trustees come to each meeting prepared and ready to discuss issues fully and openly;
- That Trustees vote their conscience, but abide by the Board’s decisions once made;
- That Trustees exemplify ethical behavior and conduct that is above reproach;
- That it endeavors to remain always accountable to the community.

In recognition of these goals, the Board has set forth the following:

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Members of the Board shall:

1. Recognize that the primary responsibility of the Board is to govern in the best interest of the education needs of the entire District. Trustees shall recognize they are an independent policy-making body that reflects the public interest in Board activities and decisions. Trustees shall be aware that they are responsible to everyone served by the District.
2. Understand that the Board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity. Use the powers of the office honestly and constructively, communicating and promoting the needs of the community to the District, and the needs of the District to the community.
3. Advocate for and defend the District, and protect the District from undue influence and pressure.
4. Keep in mind at all times that the District exists to serve students. Protect the interest of students in every decision and assure the opportunity for high-quality education for every student. Maintain consistent and vigilant oversight of the District as a policy-setting Board.
5. Be responsible for establishing Board Policies to assure the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services of the District. Act in a manner consistent with Board Policies.
6. Recognize that a Trustee is a member of an educational team, and that the strength and effectiveness of the Board is as a Board, not as individuals. Unless otherwise delegated, or unless pursuant to a Board Policy, Trustees have authority only when the Board is in an official meeting; and an individual Trustee cannot bind the Board outside of such meetings. Trustees shall not use District resources (including staff time, District issued equipment, District email account) for personal concerns, matters, or business.
7. Do not use the Trusteeship for political, financial, or personal gain. Avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest that could result because of the Trustee's position, and avoid using the Trusteeship for personal gain.
8. Recognize that deliberations of the Board in closed session are confidential and not for release or discussion outside the Closed Session to anyone or in public without the prior approval of the Board by majority vote. Maintain confidentiality of closed session material, private employee and student information, and matters subject to attorney-client privilege. Confine Board action to policy determination, planning and budget, performance evaluation, maintaining the fiscal stability of the District, and other duties set forth in law or Board Policy.
9. Create a positive climate by encouraging and supporting innovation and creativity in District programs and operations. Recognize that the Board sets an example for the entire institution; therefore, act with integrity and reflect the values of trustworthiness, respect, fairness, teamwork, and caring at all times when performing Trustee

responsibilities. Maintain an atmosphere in which controversial issues can be debated openly and fairly, protecting the dignity of individuals.

10. Focus requests for information and discussions at Board meetings on topics that address the fulfillment of the District mission, the future of the District, long-term strategies, and aligned with the policy-making role and responsibilities of the Board. Request data and information through protocols established by the Board and the Chancellor.
11. Accurately account for Trustee expenses; establish and uphold fair, legal, and prudent expense standards and reporting procedures.
12. Promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, and adhere to the principles of nondiscrimination and equality without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, gender expression, religious creed, age, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, marital status, medical condition, physical or mental disability, military or veteran status, or genetic information.
13. Complete an ethics training course for public officials biannually, either online or at a trustee conference.

STEPS IN ADDRESSING ETHICAL VIOLATIONS

1. The Board of Trustees has responsibility for monitoring itself.
2. The President of the Board plays a key role in ensuring that laws and codes of ethics are followed.
3. Violations or suspected violations of the Board's Code of Ethics will be addressed by the President of the Board, who will first discuss the violation with the Trustee in question to reach a resolution.
4. If resolution is not achieved and further action is deemed necessary, the President may appoint an ad hoc committee to examine the matter and recommend further courses of action to the Board, which may include a recommendation for censure of the Trustee in question.
5. If the President is perceived by another Trustee to have violated the Code of Ethics, the Vice President will pursue resolution.
6. If the violation is perceived to be a criminal or legal offense, the matter will be referred by the Board to the District's General Counsel and/or the Orange County District Attorney.

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