

HIGHLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
GENERAL PERSONNEL POLICY

SUBJECT: Ethics Policy

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BOARD OF TRUSTEE APPROVAL: 08/21/2024

EFFECTIVE DATE: 8/21/2024

Highland Community College (“HCC” or the “College”) is committed to promoting an atmosphere of professionalism and an educational environment where the dignity of each person is appreciated. The College values integrity and respect for the rights of others and asks that faculty, staff, volunteers, trustees, and vendors demonstrate respect in all interactions with other members of our campus communities. The College is committed to upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct and holds its faculty, staff, volunteers, trustees, and vendors to be honest, ethical, and transparent.

Abiding by these standards promotes mutual trust and public confidence in HCC as we strive for excellence in our pursuit of knowledge. Our mission statement is the foundation of our institution and is essential to sustaining an environment where we can learn, teach, work, and thrive. Every member of the HCC community has the responsibility to abide by local, state, and federal laws in addition to following all college policies, procedures, and processes.

Integrity is defined as being accountable to be honest, ethical, and transparent. Each member of the HCC community should strive to demonstrate honesty and transparency in communication and ensure their behavior maintains the highest level of integrity. Employees should act in the best interest of the College and ensure that they make decisions that are free from conflicts of interest, nepotism, or self-dealing. Employees should not use College resources for personal benefit or engage in actions that have the appearance of impropriety.

Respect is reflected in consideration of the rights of others, including all rights to freedom of speech. The College maintains a discrimination-free and harassment-free educational and work environment. HCC community members should consider the rights of others in their interactions with colleagues, students, and other community members. In their roles as college officials, employees shall listen with an open mind and strive to tactfully and accurately address misunderstandings that negatively impact College operations.

Stewardship and Compliance. HCC community members must comply with laws, rules, and regulations governing HCC. Compliance is both a legal and ethical mandate. Noncompliance can have significant consequences for HCC and HCC community members, which include damage to the College’s reputation, loss of external funding, financial penalties, loss of accreditation and criminal prosecution. Members of the HCC community shall seek guidance from their supervisor or Vice President to clarify the laws, rules, and regulations impacting their official duties.

Disclose and Avoid Conflicts of Interest. HCC employees are expected to devote their primary efforts to the HCC mission. Employees must ensure that their outside employment and/or activities does not interfere with their performance of their official duties. Additionally, if an employee is engaged in an outside activity that may create a conflict of interest or of commitment, or the appearance of such

conflict, the employee must disclose as much to the employee's supervisor or Vice President. The supervisor or Vice President will work with the employee to manage the potential conflict.

Reporting Suspected Ethics Policy Violations. All members of the HCC community have a responsibility to follow College policies and procedures and adhere to applicable laws and regulations. Employees must report reasonably suspected violations of college policies and procedures, including ethical violations. Members of the HCC community with concerns about suspected unethical behavior or noncompliance with college policies are encouraged to contact their supervisor or a Vice President. Retaliation against a member of the HCC community for good faith reporting is strictly prohibited by federal law, state law, and/or HCC policies.

Consequence of Ethical Violations. Except as provided in other HCC policies, employees are required to cooperate fully with authorized HCC internal investigations. Failure to cooperate and/or a finding that an individual engaged in a violation of the Ethics Policy may subject the individual to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or contractual relationship.