

Kern Community College District Board Policy Manual

Section Eleven—General Personnel Administration

11E Code of Ethics

The Kern Community College District recognizes that a commitment to the highest ethical and professional standards on the part of all persons associated with the District is necessary to fulfilling our mission and realizing our vision, which are policies of the District. This code of ethics is based on two (2) fundamental principles.

- The first is recognition of the dignity of all persons, which respects the inherent value and worth of each person. The second principle is a commitment to fulfilling our obligations to others using fair and honest means. All associates in the Kern Community College District, faculty, students, management, classified staff, and trustees, as well as volunteers and vendors, each bear personal responsibility for their own ethical behavior and for the ethical stature of our organization. We are committed to fulfilling the Kern Community College District's mission. While we recognize the relationship between law and ethics, we further understand that legal requirements are necessary but not sufficient, and we endeavor always to do what is right and just, even when no one is watching, compelling, or evaluating our actions.

11E1 Respect for Persons and Academic Freedom

11E1A The inherent dignity of all persons requires that we conduct ourselves with civility in all circumstances of our professional lives. This means that we do not participate in or accept, condone, or tolerate physical or verbal forms of aggression, threat, harassment, ridicule, or intimidation. The District is an institution of higher education and especially values a spirit of free inquiry and free speech. The District encourages the expression of a range of points of view, but we expect all expressions of content to be conducted in a manner respectful of persons. The District nurtures an atmosphere of mutual respect by treating everyone with dignity, even when the values, beliefs, or behavior of a person or group is different from our own. The District recognizes this foundation of mutual respect to be the basis of civil discourse in an academic environment.

11E1B The District further protects the dignity of persons by maintaining the boundaries of both necessary and appropriate confidentiality, and by prohibiting the exploitation of all persons through sexual harassment or financial, professional, or any other form of exploitation. The District seeks to develop policies, procedures, and practices which are both compassionate and fair. In order to assure that we are fair in our policies, procedures, and practices regarding the dignity and worth of persons, the District specifically prohibits discrimination based on race, color, ethnic group identification, ancestry, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, and physical or mental disability. While this prohibition is necessary, it is the genuine valuing of diversity that serves to create the general atmosphere in which persons can thrive and realize their potential.

11E2 Fairness and Honesty

11E2A The District desires to participate in a healthy work environment which emphasizes the achievement of our common purpose and the development of our potential as individuals and as an organization.

11E2B The District will actively work to build the trust necessary to conduct its mission through open, honest, and fair practices and communications at all levels.

11E2C The District values and practices the sharing of information, transparency of policy, and consistency of practice in all its dealings.

11E2D The District does not tolerate or condone dishonest practices, such as lying, stealing, plagiarizing, cheating, or deliberate misrepresentation of self, program, or information.

11E2E The District does not tolerate the misappropriation of resources of any kind, either through misuse of property, time, equipment, or systems, or through inaccurate reporting which results in personal or group gain.

11E2F The District develops and uses systems for the prohibition of bias, and for the reporting of conflict of interest, including conflicts resulting from work relationships in which employees have more than one (1) role in relation to another person, resulting in social pressures on professional conduct.

In those circumstances where such conflicts cannot be avoided and/or are considered minor in scope, we will commit to open and transparent consultation with supervisors and colleagues in order to protect individual rights, professional reputations, and the ethical reputation of our institution.

11E2G The District will engage in self-monitoring and open information sharing to assure fairness in the distribution of resources necessary to support its mission.

11E3 Competence

11E3A The Kern Community College District recognizes the importance of competence to the effectiveness and trustworthiness of its endeavors. The District maintains currency in all areas of responsibility and seeks and uses feedback for improved performance, while also recognizing and celebrating performance achievements. The District is aware of and will behave in accordance with the policies and practices of its various professional associations and share these practices with students and colleagues.

11E3B The District will further acknowledge and seek intervention related to impediments to competent performance, including but not limited to continuing education needs, drug and alcohol abuse, and physical or mental impediments to competent performance of our duties. The District will use appropriate systems to support rehabilitation and/or accommodation.

11E4 Conclusion

11E4A The Kern Community College District celebrates its existence as a unique institution for the realization of human potential in the geographic area it serves and through the global connections fostered by its online programs.

11E4B The District prizes most highly the education and achievements of students, and the fostering of lifelong learning throughout its organization.

11E4C The District allows this value not only to direct our positive behavior and limit our potentially negative behavior, but to inspire us with a sense of shared purpose and a willingness to cooperate with one another in developing the highest potential in individuals and communities.

11E5 The Binding Nature of Ethical Standards of Kern Community College District

11E5A This statement of ethics articulates mutual expectations related to the employment or participation in providing services in the District, including service on the Board of Trustees and community advisory boards, and as volunteers and contracted service providers.

11E6 Definitions

Bias – a partiality that prevents objective consideration; influence in an unfair way.

Civil Discourse – engagement in courteous and polite conversation intended to enhance understanding; a moral interaction that presupposes ethical standards.

Civility – courtesy; politeness.

Competence – the act of performing tasks and roles to an expected standard based on the possession of required skills, knowledge, qualifications, or capacity.

Dignity – bearing, conduct, or speech indicative of self-respect or appreciation of the formality or gravity of an occasion or situation; the quality or state of being worthy of esteem or respect.

District – the Kern Community College District (referred to as “we” or “our”) is a political subdivision of the State of California and includes all Colleges, Centers, satellites, online, and all sites and persons governed by the Kern Community College District Board of Trustees.

Ethical standard – the principles and norms of proper professional and moral conduct concerning the rights and duties of professionals themselves and their conduct toward others.

Ethical Stature – The reputation for achieving and maintaining the highest level of professional and moral conduct.

Ethics – a system of moral principles; moral principles, as of an individual; a set of principles of right conduct.

Exploitation – the act of using another for personal gain; the practice of treating someone badly.

Inherent – existing in someone or something as a permanent and inseparable element, quality, or attribute; existing as an essential constituent or characteristics; intrinsic.

Just – guided by truth, reason, justice, and fairness; done or made according to principle; equitable; property.

Reputation – the estimation in which a person or thing is held by others; the state or situation of being held in high esteem.

Right – in accordance with what is good or proper; in conformity with fact, reason, truth, or some standard or principle; correct in judgment, opinion, or action.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees
June 12, 2008