

## 1.25 Ethics

Bucks County Community College is committed to standards of performance which comply with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Additionally it is expected that trustees, faculty and staff of the College will act ethically and with the sole purpose of advancing the best interest of the College and its constituents. All persons who represent the College have the responsibility to do so with a high standard of personal and business ethics which protects the integrity of the College at all times. To ensure that this goal is understood and achieved the Board of Trustees established the following code of ethics to serve as the standard applicable to all individuals when performing their duties as representatives of the College.

### Standards for Ethical Conduct

College trustees, faculty and staff shall:

- Perform their duties to the best of their ability/in good faith while supporting the objectives and policies of the College.
- Protect the confidentiality of all information to which they have access.
- Act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any individual or organization.
- Refrain from using their position to secure special privileges or gain for themselves or other persons.
- Refrain from making unauthorized commitments or promises binding to the College.
- Refrain from unauthorized use of College facilities or property for their benefit or that of any other person.
- Refrain from accepting gifts of more than nominal value from people or organizations with whom the College has a business relationship.
- Refrain from accepting employment or participating in any business or professional activity that conflicts, or may appear to conflict with official duties and responsibilities at the College.
- Refrain from personal activities in which they could use, or might appear to have the opportunity to use, for personal gain, confidential information or special knowledge gained as a result of their relationship with the College.
- Provide full disclosure of any business or financial enterprise or activity in which they are involved, either directly or through family connections, which might influence, or might appear to have the capacity to influence, his or her official decisions on College matters.
- Recuse themselves from participation in any activities or decision making which may be impacted by a potential conflict of interest situation.

## **Acceptance of Gifts**

No trustee, faculty, or staff member shall directly or indirectly seek or accept any payments, fees, services or other gratuities outside the normal course of the individual's business duties from any person, company or organization which does or seeks to do business with the College. Acceptance of cash in any amount is strictly prohibited.

Trustees, faculty and staff members may not accept gifts of more than token or nominal value from a supplier or vendor under any circumstances. While at times it may be difficult to quantify the cost of a gift, it is always important to consider the appearance of impropriety and unfair business practice. The following are characteristic of items which are presumed not to influence the conduct of business and are therefore acceptable: occasional lunch or dinner during a business meeting, unsolicited plants, flowers or food products and promotional items of nominal value. Additionally, the Commonwealth Ethics Act requires disclosure annually of any gifts valued in the aggregate of \$250 or more.

## **Conflict of Interest**

The College desires to avoid any conflict of interest or appearance of conflict between the College's interests and those of any trustee, faculty or staff member. Any circumstances which could cast doubt, or even the appearance of doubt, upon an individual's ability to act with total objectivity regarding the College's interests represent a potential conflict of interest situation.

A conflict of interest exists when a person is in a position to benefit personally, directly or indirectly, as a result of a business transaction or arrangement of the College. All employees and trustees have an obligation to avoid conflict, the appearance of conflict, between their personal interests and the interests of the College in dealing with outside organizations or individuals.

## **Disclosure**

Most concerns regarding conflict of interest may be resolved and appropriately addressed through prompt and complete disclosure. As conflict of interest situations may be complex and subject to different interpretation, the practice of disclosure is aimed at preventing an individual from inadvertently placing himself in a questionable situation. To achieve that end, trustees, senior administrative staff and selected other employees will be required annually to complete a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form. Additionally trustees and other staff as identified by the County of Bucks will be required annually to complete, and file with the County of Bucks, the Commonwealth Financial Interest Statement.

The following are required to complete the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form:

Trustees

President

Vice Presidents, Assistant Vice Presidents

Deans, Assistant Deans

Purchasing Department Management staff

Controller

Executive Directors: Foundation, Physical Plant, Human Resources, Public Relations & Marketing

Grants Officers

Other individuals as designated by the President

## **Compliance**

All members of the College community are responsible for reviewing this policy carefully to ensure that each fully understands those portions of the policy which may be applicable to the position held at the College. Likewise each individual must comply with whatever is required of them. Additionally each individual bears the responsibility of disclosing any violation of this policy and may do so publicly or by following the steps outlined in Policy 1.22 Confidential Complaint Reporting. Failure to comply with this policy, to disclose a potential conflict of interest or to comply with the College's requirement for managing a determined conflict of interest may result in disciplinary action.

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES – DECEMBER 11, 2008