

NEASC STANDARD ELEVEN INTEGRITY

DESCRIPTION

This section describes the University's efforts to integrate its core values with honesty and integrity in all aspects of its operations and its attempts to set the highest possible ethical standards through its policies and procedures for students, faculty, administrators, staff, Board of Overseers and Board of Trustees. Strengthened relationships with regulatory agencies and organizations, as well as with the general public, enable ongoing development of ethical awareness and integrity in the management of University affairs. Additionally the University ensures that policies governing institutional integrity are adhered to regarding academic honesty, intellectual property, conflict of interest, privacy rights, academic freedom, non-discriminatory policies and practices, and fair grievance procedures.

INSITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Providing a public framework and forum that represents its core values, the University has developed a journal and an associated lecture series, both entitled "Reason & Respect: Civil Discourse at Roger Williams University," launched in the Spring of 2004 to promote respect, tolerance and civility. The lecture series and journal reflect positive institutional initiatives that foster the pursuit of integrity in the broadest sense.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic integrity standards have been established and published by the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of the Registrar. These are reflected in a pledge administered to all freshmen at Student Convocation. In 2005 the University assembled the Academic Integrity Task Force, made up of students, faculty and administrators, to update policies and procedures.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND PRIVACY RIGHTS

Various working committees established by the Faculty Contract have upgraded and enhanced policies addressing matters of intellectual property ownership and privacy, in response to new challenges presented by online courses and expanding faculty research responsibilities (in the former Faculty Contract). The Student Handbook (in Online Evidence Center, Standard Eleven, Doc. 34), in its copyright infringement guidelines, also addresses issues of intellectual property and academic integrity pertaining to digital transmission of works and federal law violations for such activities. The University's privacy rights are contained in the Legal and Privacy Policy, which is published on the Web sites for Athletics, Civil Discourse and Information Technology (in Online Evidence Center, Standard Eleven, Doc. 38). At student orientation sessions, FERPA information that addresses the privacy of educational records is provided to students and parents.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Roger Williams University is committed to the principle of academic freedom. A specific statement is contained in the collective bargaining agreement between the University's Board of Trustees and the University's Faculty Association/NEARI (faculty contract, (faculty contract, in Online Evidence Center, Standard Eleven, Doc. 6)). The right of students to freely select a program of study within approved guidelines is established in the Undergraduate Catalog (in Common Area, NEASC Team Workroom

and in Online Evidence Center, Standard Eleven, Docs. 18 and 19), Registrar's guidelines and Student Handbook (in Common Area, NEASC Team Workroom and Online Evidence Center, Standard Eleven, Doc. 34).

LEGAL OBSERVANCE

The University introduced in-house legal counsel in July 2003 to improve the efficacy of prudent and required legal services which, to that time, had been provided entirely through the use of retained external counsel. Staffed with three in-house attorneys, the office provides proactive services as well as legal intervention to ensure that the University's administrators, faculty, staff and students are kept informed and observe the spirit as well as the letter of applicable legal requirements.

DIVERSITY, NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICIES AND PRACTICES

The University continually strives to improve upon its recruitment and retention of women and minorities. 30% of the faculty currently teaching at the institution were hired in or after 2001. Legally recognized diversity within this group, which includes international faculty in full time positions, increased from 5% in 2001 to 12% in 2005. The added dimension of diverse backgrounds contributes to the academic enrichment of University students and increases diversity on the campus and in the community.

The Undergraduate Catalog and Student Handbook both state that RWU adheres to principles of lawful affirmative action and equal employment opportunity. Through student support, programming, and campus events, The Office of International and Multicultural Student Affairs (IMSA) engages the University community in issues of diversity and multiculturalism and promotes enrichment (in NEASC Team Workroom, Standard Eleven, Doc. 11). The Office of Admissions encourages the search for diversity, targeting publications and forums that reach a diverse range of potential students.

INTERACTIVE PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS AND ETHICAL GUIDELINES

Task forces made up of administrators, resident assistant staff, counseling staff, and representatives from Health Services, Judicial Affairs and Public Safety address matters involving student life issues on campus (in Online Evidence Center, Standard Eleven, Doc. 37). The Office of Student Affairs conducts periodic reviews of current policies, and assembles task forces as needed to address matters in areas such as Community Living, Alcohol & Other Drug Policy, and Comprehensive Response and Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Issues.

Administrative offices including Financial Aid, the Registrar, the Bursar, Counseling and the Career Center for University students have ethical guidelines in place to assure adherence to regulations (in NEASC Team Workroom, Standard Eleven, Doc. 41). The Financial Aid office follows the federal regulations of the Higher Education Act, and has developed a University Policy and Procedure manual based on the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators guidelines. The Bursar and Registrar offices follow the guidelines from the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act concerning confidentiality of student records and the Gramm-Leach Bliley Act concerning any security, computer and financial records. The Counseling Center follows the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychology and Code of Conduct, which is distributed to all staff members and interns each year, and adheres to

the Standards for Professional Conduct published by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (available on the Web site).

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Appropriate grievance policies and procedures exist for students, employees and faculty in the Student Handbook, the collective bargaining agreements for faculty, clerical-technical staff (currently being negotiated), Public Safety officers, Dining and Facilities staff, and for non-bargaining unit staff, including professional staff.

APPRAISAL

This NEASC self-study has provided the opportunity to reflect on many initiatives that support the standard of integrity at Roger Williams University. The institution recognizes that the hard work and dedication of its staff throughout the self-study process is itself one measure of integrity of which we are proud. The University also recognizes areas of concern which require attention in order to further our goal of continuous improvement.

PURSUIT OF INTEGRITY

The University desires to improve the level of civic discourse and the intellectual climate on campus by establishing annual reading projects; debate forums held four to five times per semester among faculty, students, staff and public community (Socrates Café); and Academic Showcases that feature students' original written works. These spirited discussions and presentations of ideas and opinions help to enrich the intellectual environment of the University while promoting a respectful appreciation for ideas that may be different from one's own.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The Academic Integrity Task Force (in Online Evidence Center, Standard Eleven, Doc. 36) has been charged with addressing both policy and practice regarding individual academic responsibility. Changes in intellectual property engendered by recent technologies mean that faculty, too, need to be kept informed about standards of responsible scholarship. The University has secured an internet educational tool called Turnitin.com to assist faculty and student authors in monitoring instances of plagiarism. To complement what students will find on syllabi, the University Library routinely provides academic honesty guidance for students as part of its information literacy program.

EMPLOYEE EVALUATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Despite improved recruitment and retention of women and minorities among its faculty group in the last five years, this is an area that needs continuous focus. This year, the University has created an Inclusive Excellence Task Force to examine diversity issues in all areas of the University. In the upcoming academic year, this task force will investigate the institutional philosophy, faculty, curriculum, programming, human resources, student diversity, and outreach at the University. Diversity in the student body is addressed in greater detail in Standard 6 as it relates to admissions standards, retention, and student services.

Revised employee evaluation procedures ensure a more open and transparent process of job performance assessment. The University introduced a new position

classification system and a performance-driven salary program in March of 2004. The latter allows managers to evaluate an employee's performance based on an array of performance competencies identified in each position description. Two new evaluation instruments were created for managers to assess the overall performance of the employee. These new employee measures mean better information about job performance expectations. However, managers need additional training in how to utilize assessment measures accurately and in how to establish annual performance goals and objectives with employees. The Office of Human Resources implemented training sessions in May 2005 for managers and employees to train them in the correct use of the new performance evaluation procedures.

The 2004-2008 Faculty Contract emphasizes performance assessment. Heightened expectations for documented excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service are now considered important criteria in the evaluation of faculty for tenure, reappointment and promotion. The first merit-based salary program for faculty was also introduced in the contract with specific components that outline the program application, selection criteria and an appeal procedure. The new Faculty Review Policy is designed to be fair and transparent with opportunity for faculty to comment and to respond to reports at each step of the process. The University acknowledges, however, that there has been some confusion and misunderstanding concerning the standards for peer review, and implementation has not been without conflict.

In 2004-2005, new University-wide policies were developed, including the Indemnification Policy (in Online Evidence Center, Standard Eleven, Doc. 45), Sexual Harassment Policy (in Online Evidence Center, Standard Eleven, Doc. 46), References Policy and Conflict of Interest Policy (in Online Evidence Center, Standard Eleven, Docs. 39, 40, and 49). New employment policies were also developed, including Position Classification & Performance Driven Salary Program and Employment Processing Policy & Procedure, implemented with various training sessions from the Office of Human Resources (in Online Evidence Center, Standard Eleven, Docs. 47 and 48). As with new policies, time is needed to understand the application and implementation of each policy. Therefore, the University recently hired a Manager of Training & Development, who is charged with communicating all revised policies and processes; instituting training sessions to disseminate revised policies; and seeking feedback from members of the University community. These plans and procedures need to be better disseminated and adhered to.

In response to growing numbers of research grant applications submitted by faculty, the Grants Policy Committee was formed during the fall semester of 2004. The committee included administrators, faculty and staff, and it was charged with researching and communicating information for faculty members seeking federal- and state-sponsored grants. A new policy was developed and published on the Web site entitled "Grants, Gifts, Contracts and Sponsored Research Policies and Procedures," guiding faculty, deans and staff in developing grants and in the administration of grant awards. Communication of this policy, as well as a thorough understanding of the handling of funds received from grant research on behalf of the University faculty, is still needed for improvement of processes and maintenance of system integrity.

All personnel policies for unionized employees are specified in the collective bargaining agreements for each respective union (Faculty, Clerical-Technical, Dining, Facilities, and Public Safety) (in Online Evidence Center, Standard Eleven, Docs. 4-7). Policies for the non-unionized employees need to be available on the University's Web

site following their update and revision to reflect applicable legal requirements and actual authorized practices. The University community requires guidance and management training once these policies are made available.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND CHARTER

The University is making significant efforts to conduct periodic review of procedures and policies, including the avoidance of conflict of interest and privacy rights. The Conflict of Interest policy has been developed and recently approved by executive administration, and now needs to be reviewed, discussed, and implemented by the appropriate governing groups at the University. Because the University files required business records with the Rhode Island Secretary State's Office on a yearly basis, an amendment to the University Charter needs to be made this year, as the financial size of the institution has changed.

Institutional Effectiveness

The Office of Institutional Research reinforces and improves upon the institutional integrity of the University by collecting periodic reports and data from each office as well as providing data to departments for surveys to maintain proper checks and balances of policies, procedures, and statistical data. This office provides direction to the University and to departmental offices by communicating to those areas the necessary information to build upon, filling the gaps and clarifying ambiguities in system procedures and policies. The University's institutional integrity is consistently being reexamined, reevaluated and reassessed to ensure fairness in all of its procedures and policies, as exemplified in the Fact Book (in Common Area, NEASC Team Workroom) and the internal common data set (in Common Area, NEASC Team Workroom); this information is presented to the President's executive cabinet and then to the Steering Committee, comprised of department heads, where the information is shared and cross-referenced. The Fact Book is also used by the Office of Development as a valuable source of information shared with prospective donors. Furthermore, there are "fast facts" similar to the information contained in the Fact Book available on the University's Web site that offers specific information about Roger Williams University for prospective students.

PROJECTION

The recent formation of a plethora of committees, populated by members of different University constituencies, to address a range of policy matters at RWU has fostered a greater openness and transparency in policy-making processes; perhaps more importantly, it has engaged many members of the community in a joint effort to ensure that the University maintains institutional integrity in the management of its affairs.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The Academic Integrity Task Force will complete its review of the current academic integrity policy, update it, and recommend a clear and direct system of adjudicating violations of academic integrity. This Task Force is the process of drafting a document that defines academic integrity, outlines the process for faculty to report violations, and describes an appeals process for students. A preliminary report was reviewed by the Dean's Council in January of 2006 and is now being revised before review by the Faculty Senate, and finally by the Office of Student Affairs. The University expects a full review in the upcoming academic year with full implementation going forward. The adoption of Turnitin.com will be published in Student Handbooks,

course syllabi. It will also be introduced at Orientation and in library instruction sessions, so that when new students take a pledge at student Convocation, they will understand fully the meaning and intention of the pledge.

FACULTY EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The initiation of the new peer review evaluation procedures for faculty created by the 2004-2008 contract has not been without conflict and misunderstanding. In the upcoming academic year, these standards will be clarified in a number of ways: by resolution of grievances, by greater involvement on the part of the deans working with individual faculty members to clarify any ambiguity, and by the deans working with Faculty Review Committees to provide added direction. The overall goal is to create a developmental rather than a punitive model in order to nurture the highest quality faculty.

PERSONNEL POLICIES

The University hired a Vice President of Human Resources in February of 2006 who is overseeing the recent reorganization of the department and pursuing other objectives. Chief among those objectives is the updating of personnel policies for non-unionized employees. Currently, there is a search underway for a consulting firm to review those policies and make recommendations for updating them. Meanwhile, in the short term, the current policies will be placed on the Web site as part of the University's first employee handbook.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Conflict of Interest Policy, adopted by the Office of the President in August of 2005, will ensure that conflicts are avoided and monitored in areas involving contracted employees, administration, staff and faculty, including those involved in grant-based research contracts that affect federal and state funds. The policy has been rewritten to extend to the Board of Trustees and is awaiting approval by the Board. The policy's annual disclosure form will provide evidence that the University is engaging in good ethical practices, established by proper procedures and mandated by the policy. The Office of Human Resources will distribute the policy in each new employee orientation and on an annual basis disseminate the disclosure form to the University community.

CHARTER

The need to update the University's Charter has been recognized and with the collaborative efforts of key administrators this matter will be addressed by the Offices of the President, Finance, General Counsel and Governmental Relations, with a targeted completion date of 2007.