

**Ethical Code of Conduct
For
Community College Educational Leadership
Linda Anderson Welsh
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I believe the central and *most critical* purpose of an educational leader is:

To foster a vision for the institution as a learning community that respects the inherent worth and talents of each individual and that fosters the preparation of students as active citizens of our global community, to focus the institution on the goals that will meet its vision, and provide the resources and support needed to achieve the vision. The vision is the foundation upon which all other actions are based; it is the inspiration for our daily work.

I believe the obligations of an educational leader are:

- 1) Foster community consensus on the vision for the institution and set the practices and policies in place to achieve the vision.
As the educational leader, it is incumbent upon me to create a context for setting the institution's vision for itself. Through active engagement of all the stakeholders, a consensus for our mutual vision for the institution can be reached. Once a vision is set, as the leader, it is my responsibility to ensure that processes and resources are in place to achieve the vision.
- 2) Ensure that the students are well taught and well advised.
My responsibility here as an educational leader is to ensure that the teachers in the institution set high standards for teaching and learning based on the most up-to-date knowledge in the various academic and workforce disciplines and pedagogical knowledge. Each student deserves to be taught by teachers who understand the learning process and content. Given the challenging array of options and paucity of good information to make informed choices, students also deserve to receive accurate, current and useful information that helps them make good educational choices about their futures.
- 3) Create an institution culture that supports an ethos of learning that encourages a spirit of inquiry and experimentation and fosters creative, unfettered exchange of ideas.
Higher education is predicated on the idea of a free, uncensored exchange of ideas. The rules, processes, reward structures and organization within the institution should be designed to promote authentic learning for all students without bias and support the value of reflective inquiry and research.
- 4) Set high ethical and moral standards of honesty and integrity for the institution. Promote high ideals to create opportunities for each person in the institution to reach their highest level of humanity.
As the leader, you serve as the face of the institution for the community. Your actions, for better or worse, reflect on the reputation of the institution and serve as the model for all who serve under you. Each decision should be made to promote the public good and eliminate even the appearance of unethical behavior.

- 5) Serve the public good through thoughtful policies and careful stewardship of public resources. As the leader of a public institution, one must be judicious in use of the public resources. You must ensure that the policies and procedures that are in place create a climate in which public resources are efficiency and effectively used. This includes the personnel resources; the institutions hiring practices, ongoing supervision and evaluation processes should encourage productive use of time and prudent use of resources. Stewardship of resources should also include the idea of ecological wisdom, living within the ecological resources of our community for a sustainable future.

I believe the most effective ways an educational leader can accomplish his/her purpose and fulfill the obligations inherent in the role are:

- 1) Promote social justice. Respect the worth and dignity of each individual as a human being. Seek to eliminate barriers to full participation of individuals due to bias or discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability.
- 2) Act in alignment with one's ideals, seeking to set the highest standards of moral and ethical behavior. Serve with integrity.
- 3) Promote excellence. Expect the highest levels of competence from all members of the institution. Set policies that foster personal responsibility and provide ongoing support to achieve the high expectations set.
- 4) Celebrate our diversity and create a community of caring for one another as individuals. Foster compassion and forgiveness when, as human beings, we often fall short of our high ideals.
- 5) Foster shared governance and decision-making at the lowest levels of the organization possible.
- 6) Create a transparent organization through clear communication and by making information readily available.
- 7) Understand that the leader has great power inherent in their role and use that power with care.

I believe the standards to which I should adhere in dealing with difficult decisions are as follows:

First, I will adhere to standards of justice and promote equity for all concerned.

Second, I will look to my compassion for others as a foundation for ethical decision.

Third, I will consider what I understand to be the greatest good from a long-term perspective, taking into account the rights of the minority perspective.

Fourth, I will adhere to the laws that govern the operation of the institution.

Fifth, I will operate according to the ethical standards set for community college leaders through professional organizations such as the American Association of Community Colleges.

When I confront seemingly irresolvable dilemmas, I will put the educational needs of students as my first priority.

I will weigh optional actions based on: Integrity, fairness and equity, excellence, humanity, and long-term benefits.

I will consider the value or worth of my actions based on ethical means and positive outcomes.

The philosophical bases for my Code of Ethics as an educational leader are:

Taoism: The leader acts within the flow of the Tao. The strong leader is one who acts without acting (Wu Wei); the idea is that as a leader you set the stage for ethical action of everyone around you. The leader is humble, acts in moderation, and is compassionate and respectful of others.

Buddhism: The leader acts with compassion. The leader follows the precepts of right action that avoids harm; right speech that offers truth in a non-hurtful, not exaggerated way; right livelihood that so that one's work does no harm; right effort and exercise in which one tries to improve; right mindfulness and awareness to see things as they are; right concentration and meditation; right understanding of reality as it is and right thoughts to change thinking patterns as needed.

Green Party's Ten Key Values: Grassroots democracy; social justice and equal opportunity; ecological wisdom; non-violence; decentralization; community based economics and economic justice; feminism and gender equity; respect for diversity; personal and global responsibility; and future focus and sustainability.

Judaism concepts of Peace, environment and reconciliation: Peace can only be achieved through active practice of truth, justice, and mercy. There are environmental prohibitions against pollution or wasting or destroying anything on earth. One should always try to heal the world and work for reconciliation.

Christian's value of the Golden Rule. This represents a basic idea of how all should be treated as equal to one another and worthy of respect. It is by viewing an ethical dilemma from all perspectives with a view for what is best for all involved that the best solutions can be found.

Plato's and Socrates' idea of that each person can serve a specific purpose. To me, this is not about pigeonholing individuals in one role, but acknowledges the importance of each role and points to the need to help individuals reach their highest good.

Locke's idea the any government depends on the consent of the governed, so it can be withdrawn at anytime. As an educational leader in a community college, my service is always at the will of those I serve. If I fail to discharge my duties with integrity and competence, the governed deserves to "overthrow" me.

Rousseau's idea of the social contract that governs human interaction; the idea that the laws can always be changed if they do not serve the common good.

Spinoza's idea of God as nature – inherent in everything which is both the idea of the Tao and of Spinoza. This creates a deep appreciation of everything as being a part of God, no matter what one's human judgment might be about the value of a particular thing, action or person. All are a part of God and a result of the forces of nature. This view helps one see the value of contemplation and thoughtful action. It emphasizes the interconnections of all actions -- an important consideration for a leader.

