



# SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

CITY COLLEGE • MESA COLLEGE • MIRAMAR COLLEGE • COLLEGE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

## Board Policy

### Chapter 2 - Board of Trustees

#### BP 2715 CODE OF ETHICS/STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

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The Board maintains high standards of ethical conduct. Members of the Board are committed to the following Board Code of Ethics and Conduct:

The governing board functions effectively as a collective entity to promote the institution's values and mission and fulfill its fiduciary responsibilities. The governing board demonstrates an ability to self-govern in adherence to its policies, procedures, and expectations for best practices in board governance.

The Board of Trustees maintains high standards of ethical conduct for its members.

The mission of the San Diego Community College District is to uplift diverse individuals and communities through culturally affirming teaching, learning, and work environments. The District is governed by a five-member, locally elected Board of Trustees. Trustees understand and support the mission and philosophy of community colleges in general and the District in particular. Trustees are elected to represent the public's interest in the governance of the District and have broad authority to do so under the state's education codes. As the public's representatives, Trustees must practice the highest ethical standards in performing their sworn duties and act only in the best interests of the entire community. The activities and deliberations of the Board of Trustees will be conducted following these tenets:

#### **ACTING AS A WHOLE**

Board members recognize that legal and effective functioning is by the Board of Trustees as a whole. District matters are not governed by individual actions of Board members. When acting as Board members, trustees speak and act on behalf of the District, not as individuals. Trustees use care not to misrepresent their individual opinions or actions as those of the Board of Trustees. Although trustees abide by Board direction, they retain the right to seek changes in decisions through ethical and constructive channels. In dealing with the public, individual trustees should always clarify whether they speak as a member of the Board of Trustees or as a private citizen.

#### **MANAGING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Board members avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of impropriety that could result because of their position. They do not intentionally use their Board memberships for personal gain or personal prestige.

They inform the entire Board of Trustees or the Board President when a matter under consideration might involve or appear to involve such a conflict.

## **MONITORING COMPENSATION AND EXPENSE ACCOUNTS**

Board members ensure that all District funds are spent appropriately and legally, including those that relate to their own expenses. They ensure that their expenses are authorized, reasonable and directly related to their trusteeships.

## **HANDLING SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS**

Board members render all decisions regarding the issues at hand based on the available facts and their independent judgments and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups. At the same time, District employees, their representatives, students, and their governing officers are encouraged to express their views to Board members.

Board members are aware that they are responsible to all citizens of the District, and not solely to those who elected them. The authority delegated to trustees by the voters must be exercised with as much care and concern for the least influential as for the most influential member of the community. All members of the public are encouraged to express their views to Board members.

## **USING APPROPRIATE CHANNELS**

Board members promote a healthy working relationship with the Chancellor and his/her/their staff by:

- a. supporting a cohesive and responsive administration and maintaining a climate of "no surprises."
- b. supporting District personnel in the appropriate performance of their duties and ensuring that they have the requisite responsibility and necessary authority to perform effectively.
- c. sharing all concerns, complaints, and recommendations, as appropriate, with other Board members and the Chancellor.

## **MAINTAINING APPROPRIATE CONDUCT AT BOARD MEETINGS**

Board members observe appropriate conduct at board meetings to facilitate decision-making that reflects the best interests of the college and community. Trustees meet only in public sessions unless authorized by law to meet in closed session, maintain confidentiality of privileged information and ensure an atmosphere of openness and collegiality in which controversial issues can be presented fairly.

Trustees conduct themselves with dignity and professionalism and treat every individual who interacts with the Board with respect as expressed in BP 3050 Civility and Mutual Respect.

## **EXERCISING AUTHORITY AS TRUSTEES**

Board members respect their elected position as trustees and in no way misuse their authority. Trustees keep informed about educational programs and fiscal and legal responsibilities. They commit the necessary time and energy to discharge their duties and remain informed about the District, educational issues, and responsibilities of trusteeship. They strive to promote the

highest quality educational opportunities to all members of the community while ensuring fiscal stability, institutional integrity and operational efficiency.

### **HANDLING OF ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

Board members focus Board action on policy determination, planning, overall approval and evaluation, and maintaining fiscal stability of the District and delegate appropriate authority to the Chancellor as the District's primary executive officer. District employees, students, and citizens are encouraged to freely express their views to Board members. Trustees refrain from involving themselves in matters they have placed under the authority of the Chancellor, except as needed for their proper oversight responsibilities.

### **BEHAVIOR CONTRARY TO THE CODE OF ETHICS**

Behavior that is perceived to be contrary to the Code of Ethics will be brought to the attention of the President of the Board of Trustees. The Board President will discuss the matter with the Board member in question and may establish a review process if that is warranted, which may include officers of the District in the review. The Board President will take appropriate action. If the Board President's behavior is alleged to be contrary to the Code of Ethics, the Board Executive Vice President will address the matter.

The Chancellor and President of the Board are authorized to consult with legal counsel when they become aware of or are informed about actual or perceived violations of pertinent laws and regulations, including but not limited to conflict of interest, open and public meetings, confidentiality of closed session information, and use of public resources. Violations of law may be referred to the District Attorney or Attorney General as provided for in law.

#### **Reference:**

WASC/ACCJC Accreditation Standard 3

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*(Replaces current SDCCD BP 2715)*