

Reference: Accreditation Standard IV.B.1(a), (e), and (h).

Codes of ethics (or “standards of practice” as they are sometimes called) define specific expectations for board members. The codes define what boards think is appropriate behavior for trustees, college staff and community members. Codes of ethics put in writing the “oughts” of trusteeship. They go beyond legal requirements in describing board roles and responsibilities and trustee conduct.

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District/Cuesta College Board of Trustees is expected to perform its duties and execute its responsibilities with highest standards of ethical behavior and practices. To promote the trust of the public, ensure a safe and healthy academic environment for students, faculty and staff, and inspire others in the pursuit of success, and to establish an expected level of performance to individual members, the Board adopts this Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice.

1. The Board of Trustees maintains high standards of ethical conduct for its members. Members of the Board are responsible to establish, uphold, implement and enforce all laws and codes under which the District is purview. Given this basic charge, the activities and deliberations of the Board of Trustees will be governed by the following Code of Ethics:

Each Board member will:

- a. Hold the educational welfare of the students of the District as their primary concern in all decisions and strive to meet the needs of all students.
- b. Attend and participate in all meetings, devoting the appropriate amount of time and thought to issues brought to the board to facilitate effective and creditable decisions.
- c. Protect, advance, and promote the interest of all citizens to whom I am fiscally responsible as an elected official by maintaining independent judgment unbiased by private or special interest groups.
- d. Uphold the parliamentary procedures of the governing board and promote and maintain good relations with fellow members through respectful debate and fair conduct at all times.
- e. Recognize that the Board acts as a single entity and that authority rests with consensus of the Board during legal meetings, not with the action of individual members.
- f. Render sound decisions only after discussing all aspects of the issues at hand with my fellow Board members and those who are assembled in legal meetings.
- g. Keep all matters confidential pertaining to Cuesta College which, if disclosed, would needlessly defame or injure any individual(s) or Cuesta College.
- h. Support the efforts of and protect college personnel in the proper performance of their duties.

- i. Strive for the most effective community college board service to my community, in a spirit of teamwork and commitment to public education as the greatest instrument for the preservation and the perpetuation of our representative democracy.
- j. Refer all complaints to the appropriate channels and will act on such complaints at public meetings only after there has been a failure to amicably resolve the issue through those channels.

Ethical Violations

1. The Board is responsible for monitoring itself, ensuring adherence to state and federal laws and its own code of ethics. The Superintendent/President will provide the Board with information regarding changes in legislation and ethics laws, but shall not be required to enforce Trustee ethical behavior.
2. All Board Members are expected to maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethical behavior. The Board will be prepared to investigate the factual basis behind any charge or complaint of Trustee misconduct. A Board member may be subject to a resolution of censure by the Board should they determine trustee misconduct has occurred. Censure is an official expression of disapproval of a Board member's actions by the Board.

Censure Procedure

The Board will review any complaint of Trustee misconduct to determine whether further investigation is warranted. When it has been determined that further investigation is warranted, the complaint will be referred by the Board President for investigation and review to an *ad hoc* committee composed of three Trustees, or other selected person(s), not subject to the complaint. The committee will be guided in its inquiry by the standards set forth in the Board's Code of Ethics as defined herein. In a manner deemed appropriate by the committee, a thorough fact-finding process shall be initiated and completed within a reasonable period of time to determine the validity of the complaint. The Trustee subject to the charge of misconduct shall not be precluded from presenting information to the committee. The committee shall, within a reasonable period of time, make a report of its findings to the Board for action.

Approved/Adopted: October 3, 2007