General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees: APM - 015 - The Faculty Code of Conduct

This policy is the Faculty Code of Conduct as approved by the Assembly of the Academic Senate on June 15, 1971, and amended by the Assembly on May 30, 1974, and with amendments approved by the Assembly on March 9, 1983, May 6, 1986, May 7, 1992, October 31, 2001, May 28, 2003, June 12, 2013, February 8, 2017, and January 15, 2026, and by The Regents on July 18, 1986, May 15, 1987, June 19, 1992, November 15, 2001, July 17, 2003, July 18, 2013, March 15, 2017, and January 21, 2026. In addition, technical changes were made September 1, 1988, June 11, 2010, and September 23, 2020.

Additional policies regarding the scope and application of the Faculty Code of Conduct and the University's policies on faculty conduct and the administration of discipline are set forth in APM - 016, the University Policy on Faculty Conduct and the Administration of Discipline.

The Faculty Code of Conduct as Approved by the Assembly of the Academic Senate

(Code of Professional Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct of University Faculty, and University Disciplinary Procedures)

Preamble

The University seeks to provide and sustain an environment conducive to sharing, extending, and critically examining knowledge and values, and to furthering the search for wisdom. Effective performance of these central functions requires that faculty members be free within their respective fields of competence to pursue and teach the truth in accord with appropriate standards of scholarly inquiry.

The faculty's privileges and protections, including that of tenure, rest on the mutually supportive relationships between the faculty's special professional competence, its academic freedom, and the central functions of the University. These relationships are also the source of the professional responsibilities of faculty members.

It is the intent of the Faculty Code of Conduct to protect academic freedom, to help preserve the highest standards of teaching and scholarship, and to advance the mission of the University as an institution of higher learning.

Part I of this Code sets forth the responsibility of the University to maintain conditions and rights supportive of the faculty's pursuit of the University's central functions.

Part II of this Code elaborates standards of professional conduct, derived from general professional consensus about the existence of certain precepts as basic to acceptable faculty behavior. Conduct which

departs from these precepts is viewed by faculty as unacceptable because it is inconsistent with the mission of the University. The articulation of types of unacceptable faculty conduct is appropriate both to verify that a consensus about minimally acceptable standards in fact does exist and to give fair notice to all that departures from these minimal standards may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.

In Part II a clear distinction is made between statements of (1) ethical principles and (2) types of unacceptable behavior.

1. **Ethical Principles**

   These are drawn primarily from the 1966 *Statement on Professional Ethics* and subsequent revisions of June 1987, issued by the American Association of University Professors. They comprise ethical prescriptions affirming the highest professional ideals. They are aspirational in character and represent objectives toward which faculty members should strive. Behavior in accordance with these principles clearly precludes the application of a disciplinary sanction. These Ethical Principles are to be distinguished from *Types of Unacceptable Faculty Conduct* referred to in the following paragraph. The *Types of Unacceptable Faculty Conduct*, unlike the Ethical Principles, are mandatory in character, and state minimum levels of conduct below which a faculty member cannot fall without being subject to University discipline.

2. **Types of Unacceptable Faculty Conduct**

   Derived from the Ethical Principles, these statements specify examples of types of unacceptable faculty behavior which are subject to University discipline because, as stated in the introductory section to Part II, they are "not justified by the Ethical Principles" and they "significantly impair the University's central functions as set forth in the Preamble."

The Ethical Principles encompass major concerns traditionally and currently important to the profession. The examples of types of unacceptable faculty conduct set forth below are not exhaustive. It is expected that case adjudication, the lessons of experience and evolving standards of the profession will promote reasoned adaptation and change of this Code. Faculty may be subjected to disciplinary action under this Code for any type of conduct which, although not specifically enumerated herein, meets the standard for unacceptable faculty behavior set forth above. It should be noted, however, that no provision of the Code shall be construed as providing the basis for judging the propriety or impropriety of collective withholding of services by faculty. Rules and sanctions that presently exist to cover such actions derive from sources external to this Code.

Part III of this Code deals with the enforcement process applicable to unacceptable faculty behavior. That process must meet basic standards of fairness and must reflect significant faculty involvement. In order to guide each campus in the development of disciplinary procedures that comply with this policy and Senate Bylaws, Part III provides an outline of mandatory principles to which each Division must adhere and discretionary principles which are strongly recommended.

Part I – Professional Rights of Faculty

In support of the University's central functions as an institution of higher learning, a major responsibility of the administration is to protect and encourage the faculty in its teaching, learning, research, and public service. The authority to discipline faculty members in appropriate cases derives from the shared recognition by the faculty and the administration that the purpose of discipline is to preserve conditions hospitable to these pursuits. Such conditions, as they relate to the faculty, include, for example:

1. free inquiry, and exchange of ideas;
2. the right to present controversial material relevant to a course of instruction;
3. enjoyment of constitutionally protected freedom of expression;
4. freedom to address any matter of institutional policy or action when acting as a member of the faculty whether or not as a member of an agency of institutional governance;
5. participation in the governance of the University, as provided in the Bylaws and Standing Orders of The Regents and the regulations of the University, including
   (a) approval of course content and manner of instruction,
   (b) establishment of requirements for matriculation and for degrees,
   (c) appointment and promotion of faculty,
   (d) selection of chairs of departments and certain academic administrators,
   (e) discipline of members of the faculty, and the formulation of rules and procedures for discipline of students,
   (f) establishment of norms for teaching responsibilities and for evaluation of both faculty and student achievement, and
   (g) determination of the forms of departmental governance;
6. the right to be judged by one's colleagues, in accordance with fair procedures and due process, in matters of promotion, tenure, and discipline, solely on the basis of the faculty members' professional qualifications and professional conduct.

Part II – Professional Responsibilities, Ethical Principles, and Unacceptable Faculty Conduct

This listing of faculty responsibilities, ethical principles, and types of unacceptable behavior is organized around the individual faculty member's relation to teaching and students, to scholarship, to the University,

to colleagues, and to the community. Since University discipline, as distinguished from other forms of reproval or administrative actions, should be reserved for faculty misconduct that is either serious in itself or is made serious through its repetition, or its consequences, the following general principle is intended to govern all instances of its application:

> University discipline under this Code may be imposed on a faculty member only for conduct which is not justified by the ethical principles and which significantly impairs the University's central functions as set forth in the Preamble. To the extent that violations of University policies mentioned in the examples below are not also inconsistent with the ethical principles, these policy violations may not be independent grounds for imposing discipline as defined herein. The *Types of Unacceptable Conduct* listed below in Sections A through E are examples of types of conduct which meet the preceding standards and hence are presumptively subject to University discipline. Other types of serious misconduct, not specifically enumerated herein, may nonetheless be the basis for disciplinary action if they also meet the preceding standards.

A. **Teaching and Students**

> **Ethical Principles**. "As teachers, the professors encourage the free pursuit of learning of their students. They hold before them the best scholarly standards of their discipline. Professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Professors make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to assure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from them. They protect their academic freedom." (AAUP Statement, 1966; Revised, 1987)
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> The integrity of the faculty-student relationship is the foundation of the University's educational mission. This relationship vests considerable trust in the faculty member, who, in turn, bears authority and accountability as mentor, educator, and evaluator. The unequal institutional power inherent in this relationship heightens the vulnerability of the student and the potential for coercion. The pedagogical relationship between faculty member and student must be protected from influences or activities that can interfere with learning consistent with the goals and ideals of the University. Whenever a faculty member is responsible for academic supervision of a student, a personal relationship between them of a romantic or sexual nature, even if consensual, is inappropriate. Any such relationship jeopardizes the integrity of the educational process.
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> In this section, the term student refers to all individuals under the academic supervision of faculty.

Types of unacceptable conduct:

1. Failure to meet the responsibilities of instruction, including:

   (a) arbitrary denial of access to instruction;

   (b) significant intrusion of material unrelated to the course;

   (c) significant failure to adhere, without legitimate reason, to the rules of the faculty in the conduct of courses, to meet class, to keep office hours, or to hold examinations as scheduled;

   (d) evaluation of student work by criteria not directly reflective of course performance;

   (e) undue and unexcused delay in evaluating student work.

2. Discrimination, including harassment, against a student on political grounds, or for reasons of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression, gender identity, ethnic origin, national origin, ancestry, marital status, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), genetic information (including family medical history), or service in the uniformed services as defined by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), as well as state military and naval service, or, within the limits imposed by law or University regulations, because of age or citizenship or for other arbitrary or personal reasons.

3. Sexual violence and sexual harassment, as defined by University policy, of a student.

4. Violation of the University policy, including the pertinent guidelines, applying to nondiscrimination against students on the basis of disability.

5. Use of the position or powers of a faculty member to coerce the judgment or conscience of a student or to cause harm to a student for arbitrary or personal reasons.

6. Participating in or deliberately abetting disruption, interference, or intimidation in the classroom.

7. Entering into a romantic or sexual relationship with any student for whom a faculty member has, or should reasonably expect to have in the future[1], academic responsibility (instructional, evaluative, or supervisory).

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[1] A faculty member should reasonably expect to have in the future academic responsibility (instructional, evaluative, or supervisory) for (1) students whose academic program will require them to enroll in a course taught by the faculty member, (2) students known to the faculty member to have an interest in an academic area within the faculty

8. Exercising academic responsibility (instructional, evaluative, or supervisory) for any student with whom a faculty member has a romantic or sexual relationship.

B. **Scholarship**

Ethical Principles. "Professors, guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge, recognize the special responsibilities placed upon them. Their primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and to state the truth as they see it. To this end professors devote their energies to developing and improving their scholarly competence. They accept the obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge. They practice intellectual honesty. Although professors may follow subsidiary interests, these interests must never seriously hamper or compromise their freedom of inquiry." (AAUP Statement, 1966; Revised, 1987)

Types of unacceptable conduct:

Violation of canons of intellectual honesty, such as research misconduct and/or intentional misappropriation of the writings, research, and findings of others.

C. **The University**

Ethical Principles. "As a member of an academic institution, professors seek above all to be effective teachers and scholars. Although professors observe the stated regulations of the institution, provided the regulations do not contravene academic freedom, they maintain their right to criticize and seek revision. Professors give due regard to their paramount responsibilities within their institution in determining the amount and character of the work done outside it. When considering the interruption or termination of their service, professors recognize the effect of their decision upon the program of the institution and give due notice of their intentions." (AAUP Statement, 1966; Revised, 1987)

Types of unacceptable conduct:

1. Intentional disruption of functions or activities sponsored or authorized by the University.

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member's academic expertise, or (3) any student for whom a faculty member must have academic responsibility (instructional, evaluative, or supervisory) in the pursuit of a degree.

2. Incitement of others to disobey University rules when such incitement constitutes a clear and present danger that violence or abuse against persons or property will occur or that the University's central functions will be significantly impaired.

3. Unauthorized use of University resources or facilities on a significant scale for personal, commercial, political, or religious purposes.

4. Forcible detention, threats of physical harm to, or harassment of another member of the University community, that interferes with that person's performance of University activities.

5. Discrimination, including harassment, against University employees or individuals seeking employment; providing services pursuant to a contract; or applying for or engaged in an unpaid internship, volunteer capacity, or training program leading to employment on political grounds, or for reasons of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression, gender identity, ethnic origin, national origin, ancestry, marital status, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), genetic information (including family medical history), or service in the uniformed services as defined by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), as well as state military and naval service, or, within the limits imposed by law or University regulations, because of age or citizenship or for other arbitrary or personal reasons.

6. Sexual violence and sexual harassment, as defined by University policy, of another member of the University community.

7. Violation of the University policy, including the pertinent guidelines, applying to nondiscrimination against employees on the basis of disability.

8. Serious violation of University policies governing the professional conduct of faculty, including but not limited to policies applying to research, outside professional activities, conflicts of commitment, clinical practices, violence in the workplace, and whistleblower protections.

D. **Colleagues**

Ethical Principles. "As colleagues, professors have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. Professors do not discriminate against or harass colleagues. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates. In the exchange of criticism and ideas professors show due respect for the opinions of others. Professors acknowledge academic debts and strive to be objective in their professional judgment of colleagues. Professors accept their share of faculty responsibilities for the governance of their institution." (AAUP Statement, 1966; Revised, 1987)

Types of unacceptable conduct:

1. Making evaluations of the professional competence of faculty members by criteria not directly reflective of professional performance.

2. Discrimination, including harassment, against faculty on political grounds, or for reasons of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression, gender identity, ethnic origin, national origin, ancestry, marital status, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer- related or genetic characteristics), genetic information (including family medical history), or service in the uniformed services as defined by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), as well as state military and naval service, or, within the limits imposed by law or University regulations, because of age or citizenship or for other arbitrary or personal reasons.

3. Sexual violence and sexual harassment, as defined by University policy, of another member of the University community.

4. Violation of the University policy, including the pertinent guidelines, applying to nondiscrimination against faculty on the basis of disability.

5. Breach of established rules governing confidentiality in personnel procedures.

E. **The Community**

Ethical Principles. "Faculty members have the same rights and obligations as all citizens. They are as free as other citizens to express their views and to participate in the political processes of the community. When they act or speak in their personal and private capacities, they should avoid deliberately creating the impression that they represent the University." (U.C. Academic Council Statement, 1971)

Types of unacceptable conduct:

1. Intentional misrepresentation of personal views as a statement of position of the University or any of its agencies. (An institutional affiliation appended to a faculty member's name in a public statement or appearance is permissible, if used solely for purposes of identification.)

2. Commission of a criminal act which has led to conviction in a court of law and which clearly demonstrates unfitness to continue as a member of the faculty.

Part III – Enforcement and Sanctions

The Assembly of the Academic Senate recommends that each Division, in cooperation with the campus administration, develop and periodically re-examine procedures dealing with the investigation of allegations of faculty misconduct and the conduct of disciplinary proceedings.

Procedures shall be consistent with the Bylaws of the Academic Senate. Each Division should duly notify the University Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction and the University Committee on Privilege and Tenure of the procedures it has adopted and any subsequent changes therein. These Committees in turn are directed to report periodically to the Assembly of the Academic Senate on procedures adopted by the Divisions and to recommend to the Assembly such action as they deem appropriate for assuring compliance with the Bylaws of the Academic Senate or the promotion of uniformity among Divisions to the extent to which it appears necessary and desirable.

A. In the development of disciplinary procedures, each Division must adhere to the following principles:

1. No disciplinary sanction for professional misconduct shall be imposed by the administration except in accordance with specified campus procedures adopted after appropriate consultation with agencies of the Academic Senate, as prescribed in the introduction to this part of the Code. Systemwide procedures for the conduct of disciplinary hearings are set forth in Academic Senate Bylaw 336.

2. No disciplinary sanction shall be imposed until after the faculty member has had an opportunity for a hearing before the Divisional Committee on Privilege and Tenure or Special Committee convened pursuant to Academic Senate Bylaw 336 (hereafter, the "Hearing Committee"), and subsequent to a filing of a charge by the appropriate administrative officer.

3. The Chancellor is deemed to know about an alleged violation of the Faculty Code of Conduct when it is reported to any academic administrator at the level of department chair or above. Additionally, for an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment, the Chancellor is deemed to know about an alleged violation of the Faculty Code of Conduct when the allegation is first reported to any academic administrator at the level of department chair or above or the campus Title IX Officer. The Chancellor must initiate related disciplinary action by delivering notice of proposed action to the respondent no later than three years after the Chancellor is deemed to have known about the alleged violation. There is no limit on the time within which a complainant may report an alleged violation.

4. The Chancellor may not initiate notice of proposed disciplinary action unless there has been a finding of *probable cause*. The *probable cause* standard means that the facts as alleged in the complaint, if true, justify the imposition of discipline for a violation of the Faculty Code of Conduct and that the Chancellor is satisfied that the University can produce credible evidence to support the claim. In cases where the Chancellor wants a disciplinary action to

proceed, the Hearing Committee must hold a hearing and make findings on the evidence presented unless the accused faculty member settles the matter with the Chancellor prior to the hearing or the accused faculty member explicitly waives the right to a hearing.

5. The procedures adopted shall include designation of the following disciplinary sanctions authorized in the University Policy on Faculty Conduct and the Administration of Discipline, of which this Faculty Code of Conduct is an integral part: written censure, reduction in salary, demotion, suspension, denial or curtailment of emeritus status, and dismissal from the employ of the University. The Hearing Committee shall not recommend the imposition of a sanction more severe than that in the notice of proposed disciplinary action. More than one disciplinary sanction may be imposed for a single act of misconduct, e.g., a letter of censure and a suspension.

B. In the development of disciplinary procedures, it is recommended that each Division adhere to the following principles:

1. In order to facilitate the efficient and timely handling of disciplinary matters, procedures in the Academic Senate Bylaw 336 allow each Divisional Committee on Privilege and Tenure to sit in hearing panels smaller than the full committee. The University Committee on Privilege and Tenure will establish and coordinate a Systemwide Reserve Privilege and Tenure Pool. The Systemwide Privilege and Tenure Pool may constitute part or all of the Hearing Committee, depending on the circumstances.

2. There should be an appropriate mechanism for consideration and investigation of allegations of misconduct received from members of the faculty, staff, students, the administration, and other members of the University community. Procedures should be developed which encourage a single formal investigation of the allegations leading to the proposed disciplinary action.

3. Because it is desirable that the faculty meaningfully participate in its own self-discipline, and in order to provide the administration with faculty advice in the beginning stages of what may become formal disciplinary proceedings, appropriate procedures should be developed to involve the faculty in participating in the investigation of allegations of misconduct and/or in making recommendations to appropriate administrative officers whether a disciplinary charge should be filed. Divisions are encouraged to develop procedures to provide faculty investigators with training, consultation, or legal counsel to assist with the investigation of faculty disciplinary cases.

4. The following deadlines should be adhered to, unless the timeframes associated with specific policies or campus procedures require a different timeframe (*e.g.*, the University policy on sexual violence and sexual harassment requires that an investigation be concluded within 60 to 90 business days) or there is an extension for good cause:

(a) Upon receipt of a report of an alleged Faculty Code of Conduct violation, an initial assessment, including a limited inquiry when appropriate to determine how to proceed, should be completed within 30 business days following receipt of the report;

(b) The investigation and the investigation report should be completed within 120 business days following the notice of investigation to the parties; and

(c) Disciplinary charges should be filed by the Chancellor or Chancellor's designee within 40 business days of receipt of the investigation outcome.

5. There should be provision for early resolution of allegations of faculty misconduct before formal disciplinary proceedings are instituted. Procedures should be developed for mediation of cases where mediation is viewed as acceptable by the Chancellor and the faculty member accused of misconduct. Mediators should be trained in mediation, be regarded as neutral third parties and have experience in the University environment. In cases where a settlement resolving disciplinary charges is entered into after a matter has been referred to an Academic Senate committee, the Chancellor is encouraged to consult with the Chair of the Hearing Committee prior to finalizing the settlement.

6. Appropriate precautions should be taken to safeguard the confidentiality of investigative and disciplinary proceedings. Procedures should be developed that allow information about an ongoing disciplinary proceeding, including information about the outcome, to be shared with complainant(s), to the extent allowable by State law and University policy.

7. There should be provision, to the maximum feasible extent, for separating investigative and judicial functions. A faculty member who has participated in investigating an allegation of misconduct or in recommending that a charge should be filed should thereafter not participate, as a member of the Committee, in the hearing of that charge.

8. In the implementation of all procedures, specific provisions should be made for the time span within which certain actions may or must be taken. Every effort should be made to conform to reasonable, specified time frames. Consistent with Academic Senate Bylaw 336, unless extended for good cause, a hearing should commence no later than 60 calendar days from the date disciplinary charges are filed with the Committee on Privilege and Tenure. The chair of the Hearing Committee will be appointed within 14 calendar days of receipt of the disciplinary charges. The full Hearing Committee, whether drawn from the Systemwide Reserve Privilege and Tenure Pool or not, shall be appointed according to Academic Senate Bylaw 336, and no later than 50 calendar days from the date disciplinary charges are filed. A faculty member who is entitled to a hearing should not be permitted thereafter to delay imposition of discipline by refusing to cooperate or being unavailable for a scheduled hearing. A hearing shall not be postponed because the faculty member is on leave or fails to appear.

9. There should be consideration of provision for the availability of removal or termination of a sanction, either automatically or by administrative discretion, in individual cases. The nature and circumstances of the offense should determine the severity and type of discipline.

10. Procedures should be developed for keeping records of disciplinary matters in a confidential manner and sharing such records with Senate and administrative officers with a need to know in accordance with State law and University policy.

11. Pursuant to Academic Senate Bylaw 336, "good cause" consists of material or unforeseen circumstances sufficient to justify the extension sought.

Revision History

January 29, 2026:

- Substantive revisions to incorporate the recommendation to establish a Systemwide Reserve Privilege and Tenure Pool, coordinated by the University Committee on Privilege and Tenure.
- Substantive revisions to incorporate timeframes for completion of initial assessments, investigations and investigation reports, and the filing of disciplinary charges, as well as extensions for good cause.
- Substantive revisions to reflect a deadline for the appointment of the full Hearing Committee.
- Technical revisions to reflect conforming language with, and timeframes specified in, Academic Senate Bylaw 336.

September 23, 2020:

- Technical revision to remove gendered language.

For details on prior revisions, please visit the policy issuance web page.