

## **Standard Eleven Integrity**

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### **Description**

Goodwin College abides by, adheres to, and advocates for high ethical standards in the management of its affairs and in all its dealings with students, faculty, staff, external agencies, and organizations and the general public. The college adheres to the policies of the Board of Governors for Higher Education in Connecticut, the U.S. Office of Education, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), Inc., and the guidelines set forth by our Board of Trustees.

Through its institutional and programmatic accreditations, the college has demonstrated a willingness to self-regulate by adhering to accreditors' ethical standards related to integrity and honesty. As reported on our website and in our catalog, the following programs have successfully obtained programmatic accreditation:

- Medical Assisting: Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) and the Commission on the Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)
- Associate Degree in Nursing: National League of Nursing (NLN)
- Respiratory Care: Committee on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoArc)
- Histologic Science: American Society of Clinical Pathology (ASCP)

We completed the reaccreditation process for the Associate Degree in Nursing and the Histologic Science programs this past fall. As indicated in our academic plan, all of the programs for which professional accreditation is possible are in various stages of preparation (e.g., aligning program outcomes to national standards, developing assessment processes, or writing self-studies). For example, the Child Study and RN-to-BSN Nursing programs will both seek national accreditation as soon as accreditation standards allow. All accreditations the college has received and seeks to receive are the result of continuous self-assessment.

As stated in its Mission, Goodwin College is committed to educating its diverse student population academically and socially to better prepare them to be contributing participants in our society. While academic growth is a primary goal, integrity, that is, showing respect, honesty, fairness, and tolerance in all endeavors by all members of the school community is advocated by our leadership. All Goodwin College members are encouraged to expect, and have the duty to uphold, these ideals. The catalog, faculty and staff handbooks, and student handbook all stress the importance of following the policies and practices that characterize the college's relations with internal and external constituencies.

### **Students**

The college communicates expectations through formal and informal interactions such as new student orientation activities or ongoing advising and counseling meetings. In addition, the college catalog, student handbook, and college website contain policies and procedures on non-discrimination, academic honesty, appeal of grades, services for people with disabilities, avoidance of conflict of interest, and privacy rights. Also, as noted in these documents, procedures are in place to resolve grievances for students in a fair and equitable way. These policies apply to all students, regardless of whether classes are conducted in the classroom or on-line.

Relevant to students are privacy rights primarily protected under the United States Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. They are clearly published in the college catalog and the student handbook. Certainly, all federal and state requirements for a drug-free campus and workplace are communicated and maintained as well. Another relevant area is the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Goodwin College actively seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for students and employees who qualify under these acts, and the Assistant Dean/Registrar oversees the College's implementation of this policy. Finally, to clarify college expectations with respect to academic dishonesty, the Faculty Senate recently approved a revised Academic Integrity Policy. The policy defines various forms of academic misconduct, such as plagiarism, and the consequences for those actions. In addition, the policy outlines a student's right when he or she is accused of academic misconduct.

All students have the opportunity to suggest ideas, voice concerns, or raise issues through the Goodwin College Student Council, Academic Review Committee, and the long-standing open door policy throughout the institution. The President of the Student Council serves as an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees with full-voice but no voting privileges. Additionally, student representatives participate in the Board of Trustees annual planning retreat and are invited to participate on ad-hoc committees and staff meetings when deemed appropriate. The Academic Review Committee (ARC) is the final arbitrator for all student grievances as outlined in the catalog and handbooks.

### ***Faculty and Staff***

The college communicates expectations in the policies and standards set forth in the staff and faculty handbooks, published annually both in print and online by the Executive Vice President/Provost's Office.

These handbooks contain policies on topics including: equal employment opportunities, sexual harassment, computer communications, professional conduct and non-disclosure. Staff and faculty job descriptions further delineate the responsibilities of each position. While full-time faculty receive standard annual letters of agreement, adjunct faculty receive offer letters that also delineate their roles and responsibilities. Performance evaluation procedures, wage and benefits programs, and criteria for rank and promotion are outlined in the faculty and staff handbooks. The Executive Vice President/Provost administers the Human Resources functions of the college. Legal counsel is provided on a consulting basis to ensure compliance with ethical behavior, employment policies, and applicable state labor laws. A consultant assists with human resource functions, such as the review and revision of the employee handbooks.

Of particular relevance to faculty are issues of academic freedom. As stated in the Faculty Handbook, instructors are given academic freedom in the classroom. The college strives to achieve a balance between curriculum consistency across courses and academic freedom within courses. Our faculty members are encouraged to select texts, design assessments, and develop new courses within the guidelines set forth by individual programs. Furthermore, faculty members are encouraged to share their expertise outside of the classroom setting by offering workshops, coordinating community service initiatives, and participating in other volunteer activities.

The college adheres to Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Laws. The college does not discriminate in the administration of educational policies, admission policies, financial aid policies, or other college-administered programs. A non-discrimination statement is published in the college catalog, faculty and staff handbooks, as well as the college website. In addition, all employment postings include the required non-

discrimination statement. This statement was recently updated with approval by the Board of Trustees to include “persons with physical disabilities” as required by recent legislation.

All faculty members have the opportunity to suggest ideas, voice concerns, or raise issues through the Faculty Senate, Faculty Forum, or directly with their Department Chair. If additional review is needed, the faculty member may also raise concerns with the Vice President for Academic Affairs who may deem it necessary to bring the issue before the Academic Review Committee, chaired by the Provost. The Academic Review Committee (ARC) is the final arbitrator for all faculty grievances.

### ***Administration and Board of Trustees***

Goodwin College manages administrative operations with integrity and honesty, and is in compliance with the guidelines set forth by the Board of Trustees. In addition to the college’s mission and code of ethics, many departments are guided by the ethical standards established by national organizations. For example, all our academic advisors are members of the National Academic Advising Association, our Assistant Vice President for Enrollment and his managers are members of the National Association of Collegiate Admissions Counselors, and our career counselors belong to the National Career Development Association. All departments adhere to federal and state Law (e.g., Business and Financial Aid). The budgetary matters of the college are subject to annual audit and review.

The Board of Trustees, as stewards of the college, provide policy direction to the administration of the college ensuring that the college advances its mission, continually seeks to improve institutional effectiveness, and maintains institutional integrity. This past year they discussed and adopted a revised conflict of interest policy applicable to all trustees and members of the President’s Cabinet.

The college has made it a priority to publish all federal, state, and accreditation required policies and procedures for staff and faculty in the employee handbooks for students in the college catalog and student handbook. Some programs, such as nursing and respiratory care, publish programmatic handbooks. We are in the process of assuring that all of this information is more accessible to the college community by including it on the website.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

The integrity of the college is safeguarded by the President and Vice-Presidents of the college. For example, the Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and the Provost review all published policies during the annual republishing of the catalog and handbooks to ensure accuracy and compliance with federal, state, and accreditation standards.

In addition, a College Committee on Integrity was formed as part of the new governance structure to monitor compliance related to all applicable federal and state laws and regulations and to ensure adherence to college policies, as well as equitable application of the policies across the college community. Further, the Committee on Integrity is responsible for validating and periodically reviewing all claims made to the public by the college. Although all marketing and advertising material is reviewed for accuracy by the college administration before being disseminated to the public, the Committee on Integrity is charged to periodically review the validity of all public statements and claims. This committee, chaired by the Provost, meets quarterly and reports directly to the Board of Trustees through the Office of the President.

The Integrity Committee is charged with conducting periodic assessments to determine the institution’s effectiveness in the application of its policies and procedures. This committee,

as well as the Academic Review Committee's effectiveness, will be evaluated as part of the governance's new assessment process coordinated by the College Committee on Assessment.

### **Appraisal**

Goodwin College strives to provide the best quality education and expects that all students and employees behave in a professional and ethical manner. We rigorously adhere to all NEASC requirements related to institutional integrity, as well as to ethical standards reflected in other professional and programmatic accreditation standards. Ethical behavior is also reflected in our academic programs and by membership in national organizations by our professional staff. Our values are reflected in the college's policies and procedures, and they will continue to serve as a guide as the college moves towards becoming a baccalaureate institution. We believe and expect that compliance results in the overall culture and identity of the college, benefiting the entire community.

### **Students**

Our process for developing policies and procedures has worked as we continue to be better at using technology to improve communication with students. As we strive to create a culture of a baccalaureate institution, we anticipate areas where additional policies and procedures are needed. For example, the Faculty Senate has recently adopted a more comprehensive Academic Integrity Policy in an effort to clarify expectations and procedures for both students and faculty. In reviewing our publications for the self-study, we realized that nowhere do we address the subject of academic freedom for students. We realize that a separate academic freedom policy for students is necessary. Furthermore, as we continue to grow and serve a diverse population, the need to create a Code of Civility or Conduct is essential to guide students in their interactions with faculty, staff, and other students.

Respecting and upholding confidentiality and privacy within the college community continues to be of the utmost importance. Students are now identified within the college by individual student identification numbers instead of social security numbers. With the centralization of college personnel at one location, all student records are secured in locked areas within campus wide departments. Access to these records is limited to appropriate staff. There remains a need to develop even more consistent policies and training with regard to ensuring confidentiality. To address this issue, a Red Flag Policy is being drafted by Administration pursuant to federal requirements.

As more students are with us for longer periods of time, we also anticipate expanding the role of the student government and involving students more in the grievance process. The Academic Review Committee remains effective in addressing and resolving grievances in a fair and equitable manner for students.

### **Faculty and Staff**

Issues and matters pertaining to truthfulness, clarity, and fairness are adequately addressed in the college's publications. Policies concerning academic honesty and academic freedom are reviewed and approved by the Faculty Senate. Faculty members are represented on the College Committee on Integrity. Because the faculty has a voting member on the Board of Trustees, they are involved in the creations of policies concerning matters of integrity. Faculty members are guided by them in their interaction with students and each other.

As we transition to become a four-year institution, faculty are enthusiastic about engaging in college-supported research and scholarly activity. Therefore, there is a need to develop a

policy addressing intellectual property rights. In addition, while faculty's primary responsibility is teaching, some faculty have already engaged in research projects. As a result, we laid the groundwork for an Institutional Review Board (IRB) in summer of 2009. Working with input from local four-year colleges, IRB membership and documentation was drafted. The IRB will be the responsibility of the Director of Institutional Research. It will begin meeting in January 2010.

### ***Administration and Board of Trustees***

Fundamental principles and rules continue to be used as a basis for our daily operations and are directly related to the values and mission of the college. The college leadership is approachable, involved, and committed to fostering an atmosphere of integrity and openness between faculty, staff, administration, and the Board of Trustees. We are a family and have successfully maintained that family-feeling on our larger campus.

Although many employees can state what our core values are, we realize that we have not formally articulated them nor have we established an actual Code of Ethics. At the May 2009 Board of Trustee meeting, the Chairman appointed a special committee to begin the process of articulating our core values and writing a comprehensive code of ethics that would be applicable to all. We hope to supply the visiting team with an initial draft.

In the process of writing this NEASC Standard, we determined that our past practice of decentralized policy review and storage was outdated, and that the college community would be better served by (a) storing policies online, in a central location and (b) by systematically reviewing accuracy and consistency across print and online publications. A procedure is in place where each department has a liaison responsible for updating certain pages on the website, but nothing is yet in place to see that it is being done in a timely fashion. Furthermore, a committee is currently working to research similar four-year institutions and to recommend improvements to our policy approval, recording, and communication systems.

### ***Areas of Achievement***

- Valuing and adhering to standards established by national, state, and professional accreditation agencies.
- Faculty, staff, and the Board of Trustees participate in developing and improving policies and procedures to ensure integrity.
- The mechanism for addressing grievances for students, faculty, and staff remains effective.
- The establishment of a College Committee on Integrity that reports directly to the Board through the President.
- The groundwork laid for an Institutional Review Board to educate the college community about, and monitor activities related to, ethical research practices.

### ***Areas of Concern***

- Lack of formalized core values and code of ethics to serve as a guideline for internal and external relationships and achievement of mission.
- Lack of employee orientation on issues such as FERPA and sexual harassment.
- Continued review and creation of policies to support the increasing number of students and academic offerings.

## Projections

The policies and procedures of Goodwin College are reflective of the institution's integrity, and they will continue to serve as a guide as the college moves towards becoming a baccalaureate institution. As we strengthen our internal processes, we will need to:

- Formalize our code of ethics and institutional core values.
- Complete and implement a policy governing the creation of campus-wide policies and procedures as well as departmental policies. This must include information on how policies are revised and where and how they will be made available to the college community. A new numbering system needs to be adopted along with a communications plan. A draft has been completed and is scheduled to be presented to the College Leadership Council in March 2010. The new policy should be in place by May 2010. The effectiveness of the new policy will be monitored by the College Committee on Assessment and the College Committee on Integrity.
- Create new policies and procedures to support the increasing number of students, faculty, and academic offerings. For example, we need to have an Academic Freedom policy for students.
- Involve the increasing number of bachelor degree-seeking students on campus in the student government (e.g., plan for the expansion of responsibilities and more involvement in resolving student grievances).
- Draft additional policies and implement related procedures in areas related to the offering of bachelor degrees (e.g., code of conduct, code of values, expansion of disability services, contractual agreements with student clubs and organizations, transfer policies, intellectual property, etc.).
- Establish training modules for new employees to inform them about current policies (e.g., consistent procedures for maintaining confidentiality, affirmative action, FERPA) and provide review for current employees.
- Discuss the results of the first year evaluation of the governance committees (e.g., Integrity and Academic Affairs).