Ethics Policy

Category: Administration and Governance
Responsible Office: Office of the President
Responsible Executive: President

Date Established: to be determined
Date Last Updated: 11/28/17

Summary

Pursuit of the University at Buffalo mission of teaching, research, and public service requires a shared commitment to ethical conduct in all university activities. This policy provides an overarching code of ethics by which university faculty, staff, and student employees are expected to abide.

Policy Statement

The University at Buffalo (UB, university) is committed to upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct. Abiding by these standards promotes mutual trust and public confidence as we strive for excellence in our pursuit of knowledge. Our core values are the foundation of our academic institution and are essential to sustaining an environment where we can learn, teach, conduct research, work and thrive. University faculty, staff, and student employees have a responsibility to work towards the fulfillment of the following values by conducting themselves ethically, with the highest level of integrity, and in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies:

Honesty and Integrity – We demonstrate honesty, transparency, in all communication and conduct while maintaining the highest level of integrity. We uphold the values of this code and make decisions based upon the greater good conducting ourselves free of personal conflicts, nepotism, self-dealing, using resources for personal benefit, or appearances of impropriety. Our commitment to ethical standards is communicated through both instruction and example.

Respect – In our commitment to inclusiveness, diversity and mutual respect for differences, we

- demonstrate respect towards the rights and dignity of others
- show concern for the welfare of others
- avoid all forms of harassment, discrimination, threats, or violence
- expect equality, impartiality, openness, and due process without reference to individual bias

Stewardship and Compliance – We utilize all resources and information entrusted to our care in a wise, and prudent manner in order to achieve our educational mission and strategic
objectives. We uphold civic virtues and duties by obeying laws and policies. Practicing good stewardship includes:

- using university property, equipment, finances, materials, electronic and other systems, labor, and other resources only for legitimate university purposes
- preventing waste and abuse
- promoting efficient operations
- following sound financial practices including accurate financial reporting, processes to protect assets, and responsible fiscal management and internal controls
- engaging in appropriate control and monitoring activities
- promoting continuous education of laws, policies, and guidelines

Accountability and Responsibility – We take responsibility for our choices and actions by upholding accountability and not assigning or shifting blame or taking improper credit. We exercise the utmost diligence in ensuring that all of our university operations adhere to appropriate business protocols and best practices. We act with responsibility by reporting instances where these standards may not have been upheld.

Avoidance of Conflicts of Interest - We have an obligation to be objective and impartial in making decisions on behalf of the university. We disclose potential conflicts of interest and adhere to any management plans created to eliminate conflicts. We ensure that personal relationships do not interfere with objective judgment in decisions affecting university employment or the academic progress of a community member.

Reporting Ethics Policy Complaints and Violations
The university is committed to an environment where open, honest communication is the expectation, not the exception. Employees are encouraged to submit reports relating to activities that involve unethical behavior or violations of State University of New York, UB, UB Foundation, Faculty Student Association, Research Foundation, and all internal policies. The EthicsPoint site is hosted by a third party hotline provider to ensure that reports are confidential and anonymous. The site is available at: https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/48992/index.html or by dialing the hotline at 844-678-0455. The Office of Internal Audit will review and investigate as appropriate all reports and, when warranted by the facts, require corrective action and discipline in accordance with policy and law. Employees who make a good faith report of suspected fraud, waste, or abuse are protected from retaliation.
Background

An environment that encourages the highest level of integrity from its members is critical to the university. Adherence to the highest standards of ethical conduct is an integral part of the university’s long-range goals of attracting quality students, faculty, and staff; ensuring proper stewardship of its resources; and attracting gifts, grants, and other forms of support.

Applicability

This policy is applicable to all members of the university community including faculty, staff, and student employees, regardless of funding source.

Students taking courses, attending classes, or enrolled in academic programs are required to read and affirm the Student Code of Conduct.

Definitions

Accountability- The obligations of an individual or group of individuals to account for its activities, accept responsibility for them, and to disclose the results in a transparent manner.

Ethics- A moral philosophy or set of standards practiced by a person or group of people.

Integrity- Strict adherence to a moral code, reflected in transparent honesty and complete harmony in what one thinks, says and does.

Responsibility

Supervisors, Managers, University Leaders

- Ensure that the Ethics Policy has been distributed to all direct reports.
- Reinforce the Ethics Policy in all university related business to ensure compliance.
- Encourage and support efforts by employees to perform duties and responsibilities at the highest ethical standards.
- Report suspected violations through EthicsPoint or through appropriate university offices.
- Address employee misconduct.

Faculty, Staff, Student Employees

- Conduct university related activities with the utmost integrity and ethical conduct.
- Comply with university policies governing conduct.
- Report suspected violations through EthicsPoint or through appropriate university offices.
Internal Audit

- Investigate alleged policy violations; determine whether a violation has occurred and whether action is being required.

Contact Information

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Related Information

University Links
EthicsPoint https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/48992/index.html
Fraud and Irregularities – Awareness and Reporting Policy: http://www.buffalo.edu/administrative-services/policy1/ub-policy-lib/fraud-reporting.html
Internal Control  http://www.buffalo.edu/administrative-services/internal-controls.html
Student Code of Conduct http://www.buffalo.edu/studentlife/life-on-campus/community/rules.html

Related Links
SUNY Code of Ethical Conduct http://www.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/boardoftrustees/BOT-code-of-conduct.pdf
SUNY Ethics Compliance Mandates http://system.suny.edu/compliance/topics/ethics/ethics-compliance/
Public Officers Law Code of Ethics http://www.jcope.ny.gov/about/ethc/PUBLIC%20OFFICERS%20LAW%2074.pdf
SUNY Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) http://system.suny.edu/compliance/topics/ethics/jcope/
Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) http://jcope.ny.gov/