

SAN JOSÉ STATE
UNIVERSITY
ONE WASHINGTON SQUARE
SAN JOSÉ, CA 95192

**F24-7, University Policy, Statement of Faculty
Professional Responsibility**

Legislative History:

On December 9, 2024, the Academic Senate approved University Policy, Statement of Faculty Professional Responsibility, presented by Senator Riley for the Professional Standards Committee.

Rescind: S99 -8

Action by University President:

Date: _____

Signed and approved by: _____
Cynthia Teniente -Matson, President,
San José State University

University Policy

Statement of Faculty Professional Responsibility

Legislative History: This proposal would rescind ~~S99~~ Professional Responsibility Statement and replace it with two policy recommendations: AS 1884 Statement on Faculty Professional Responsibility and AS 1883 Statement on Academic Freedom and Establishing the Academic Freedom Committee.

Rationale: The Statement of Professional Responsibility in University Policy ~~S99~~ was not updated for nearly a quarter of a century even as the statements upon which it was based were

changed. In recent years, many institutions of higher education have enacted policies to describe unprofessional conduct that does not fall under any specific statutory protections (often described as "bullying"), but which is nevertheless disruptive to the work of the University and

Statement of Professional Responsibility for Faculty

A. Preamble

Professional responsibility is the natural complement of the academic freedom essential to the university's mission. Through their responsible professional conduct, faculty members promote and protect academic freedom. Since faculty members belong to a profession with the rights of self-governance, they also have the obligation to establish standards of professional conduct and procedures to enforce them. The following standards provide guidance for certain ethical questions which may arise over the course of a faculty member's career, but they are not an exhaustive list. They are built upon the foundations of academic freedom; they are the ideals to which all faculty members should aspire.

B. Faculty Responsibilities

The responsibilities of faculty members may be considered from five related, but somewhat conceptually distinct, perspectives: (1) as members of an academic profession; (2) as teachers; (3) as colleagues; (4) as members of an academic institution; and (5) as members of a community.

1. As members of an academic profession, faculty members:

a. serve as intellectual leaders; they

- seek and state the truth as they see it.
- develop and improve their instructional and scholarly competence
- exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in applying, extending, and transmitting knowledge.
- practice, foster, and defend intellectual honesty, freedom of inquiry and instruction, and free

- perform their research with honesty and integrity.
- respect the ethical and legal considerations that underlie their work and output, as consistent with the ethical principles and guidelines of their discipline.
- comply with guidelines governing any grant or other funds related to a research or creative project.
- strive to contribute to the body of knowledge in their discipline and to disseminate such knowledge appropriately.
- critically evaluate their work prior to dissemination.
- use university and other resources with integrity and consideration of the mission of the university.

2. As teachers, faculty members:

- a. treat students fairly and respectfully; they
 - assure that their evaluations of students affect only matters relevant to the

5. As members of a community, faculty members:

- a. publicly distinguish when they speak or act as private citizens from when they do as an official representative of the university so as not to lead others to mistake them

inconsistent with their professional responsibility and the mission of the University. The conflicts of interest include but are not restricted to sexual relationships.

A similar caveat applies, of course, to the instruction and evaluation of students who are family members, since faculty disinterestedness is problematic in this case as well.

Exceptions to these injunctions may be made after consultation with an instructor's department chair or other appropriate party, such as a supervisor or a dean. The grounds for exception must be compelling (e.g., curricular or staffing restrictions, student's chosen academic program).

While acknowledging that the propriety of a personal relationship between a student and an instructor is indeed a sensitive issue for all involved, the faculty holds that the rights of faculty and students to free association must be honored and protected in instances when professional disinterestedness is not expected or required. The faculty also acknowledges that disinterestedness thrives best in an atmosphere free from suspicions of favoritism, nepotism, coercion and harassment.

Conflicts of interest in professional relationships: Faculty members rightfully expect unbiased evaluations of their academic and professional performance. The responsibilities of the faculty in this regard are detailed in Section II.B.3 of this document. Examples of conflicts of interest here include evaluating or supervising faculty who are family members or parties in relationships grounded in interests (e.g., personal, professional or financial interests) that preclude disinterestedness.

Beyond questions of peer evaluation, the faculty must ensure that its research or comparable activities are consistent with the mission of the University and with professional standards. The faculty must maintain a disinterested pursuit of truth in professional activities, one uncompromised, for example, by the pursuit of fees, royalties, and other forms of compensation. Disinterestedness comes into question when subsidiary concerns or private gain makes one's intellectual honesty and freedom of inquiry problematic.

The faculty holds that the right of a faculty member to freely associate with colleagues must be honored and protected in instances when professional conflicts of interest are not at issue. Following the principle of disinterestedness, the faculty also recognizes that academic relationships between faculty members may become sensitive issues when placed in the context of professional evaluation and supervision (e.g., the recruitment, retention, tenure or promotion of faculty). A faculty member should be excused from these duties when a potential conflict of interest exists. If it is not possible to excuse a faculty member in such circumstances, the faculty member who conducts the evaluation or supervision should advise his/her chair or other appropriate party (e.g., a supervisor or dean) of the situation.

Importance of ethical conduct in fact and appearance: Recognizing a conflict of interest in the area of faculty responsibility is often a matter of common sense; at other times it is a matter of law. But beyond the ethical minimums of law and common sense, there exists a higher standard toward which the faculty should strive. That is, a faculty member ought to

Importance: Severe, persistent, or pervasive unprofessional behavior can undermine other

