Institutional Integrity

Boise State’s Story

In November 2008, President Kustra introduced our newly adopted “Statement of Shared Values”\(^1\) and “Standards of Conduct”\(^2\) to the campus community. His letter\(^3\) provides an excellent overview of our commitment to institutional integrity:

“Our commitment to excellence as an institution extends to all aspects of our educational, research and public service mission. As stewards of the University’s finances, assets, resources, and public image, it is important that we conduct ourselves with honesty and integrity. The Statement of Values and Standards of Conduct establishes a foundation for acceptable behavior. The core message is, as Boise State University employees, the way in which we act impacts Boise State University’s reputation with employees, students, public officials, the community, and citizens of Idaho. In short, our reputation is critical to our success, and our actions determine what that reputation will be.

Our core values are academic excellence, caring, citizenship, fairness, respect, responsibility, and trustworthiness. The Standards of Conduct are established by state statutes, State Board of Education policies and University policies and procedures. While laws and policies governing certain actions may change from time to time, our core values remain constant. All employees and agents acting on behalf of Boise State University are expected to adhere to these values and standards.

Each of us has an obligation to familiarize ourselves with applicable laws, State Board of Education and University policies and procedures, and to act accordingly. When in doubt, seek advice; talk to your colleagues, supervisor, or University Counsel. You have a duty to speak up if you are being pressured to behave in a manner inconsistent with these laws, policies, and values. You also have an obligation to protect the University by reporting potential or apparent violations. There is to be no retaliation against any person for making a report of a potential violation of law, of Boise State University policy or of this code.

We are challenged as an organization to make choices wisely and to avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Working together, we will continue to uphold the standards of excellence that define our institution.”

---

1 Statement of Shared Values; http://www.boisestate.edu/standardsandvalues/values.shtml
2 Standards of Conduct; http://www.boisestate.edu/standardsandvalues/conduct.shtml
3 Letter from President Kustra
Standard 9: Institutional Integrity

State Laws and State Board of Education Policies
(9.A.1, 9.A.4, 9.A.5) ...........................................................................................................4

University Policies and Procedures
  — Statement of Shared Values ..........................................................................................5
  — Standards of Conduct & Student Code of Conduct ..................................................6
  — Conflict of Interest .......................................................................................................8
  — Academic Freedom .......................................................................................................8
  — Office of Internal Audit & Advisory Services ..............................................................9

Accurate and Consistent Representation (9.A.3) ...........................................................10
State Laws and State Board of Education Policies

9.A.1 The institution, including governing board members, administrators, faculty, and staff, subscribes to, exemplifies, and advocates high ethical standards in the management and operations and in all of its dealings with students, the public, organizations, and external agencies.

9.A.4 Institutional policy defines and prohibits conflict of interest on the part of governing board members, administrators, faculty, and staff.

9.A.5 The institution demonstrates, through its policies and practices, its commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge consistent with the institution’s mission and goals.

9.A.1: We subscribe to, exemplify, and advocate high ethical standards.

As a state institution governed by the Idaho State Board of Education, Boise State must adhere to state laws and board procedures. The State of Idaho establishes the tone for ethical standards in state entities with Idaho Code 59-7 – Ethics in Government, which declares that public officials have a public trust and must act in the public interest. In addition, the Office of the Attorney General maintains an “Idaho Ethics in Government Manual” that provides detailed guidance about various situations. The introduction to the manual states:

“The Idaho Legislature has formalized our state’s commitment to honest and ethical government by enacting several statutes governing the ethical behavior of public officers. These laws are intended to ensure that public officials remain public servants.”

“Responsible and ethical public officials hold themselves to an even higher standard than mere compliance.”

The State Board of Education echoes the state’s commitment to ethics with several specific policies. For example, Board Policy Section I,G. – Conflict of Interest states

“All decisions of the Board, administrators, and employees are to be made solely on the basis of a desire to promote the best interests of the institution, school or agency and the public good.”

The Board addresses “free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge” in Policy Section III.B. – Academic Freedom and Responsibility, reaffirming that “academic freedom should not be abridged or abused” and stating that “Freedom in research and teaching is fundamental to the advancement of truth.” The policy also identifies responsibilities associated with academic freedom.
University Policies and Procedures

9.A.1 The institution, including governing board members, administrators, faculty, and staff, subscribes to, exemplifies, and advocates high ethical standards in the management and operations and in all of its dealings with students, the public, organizations, and external agencies.

9.A.2 The institution regularly evaluates and revises as necessary its policies, procedures, and publications to ensure continuing integrity throughout the institution.

9.A.4 Institutional policy defines and prohibits conflict of interest on the part of governing board members, administrators, faculty, and staff.

9.A.5 The institution demonstrates, through its policies and practices, its commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge consistent with the institution’s mission and goals.

—STATEMENT OF SHARED VALUES

One of the identifying characteristics of our vision to become a metropolitan research university of distinction is the destination Vibrant Culture, which “embraces and fosters innovation, responsiveness, inclusiveness, accessiblity, and effective stewardship.” In the Fall of 2005, the University created the Campus Climate Task Force (CCTF), comprised of faculty, staff, administrators, and students. The charge of the CCTF was to “(i) identify and gauge perceptions on the campus community about equity in regard to issues of age, gender, faith, disability, nationality, race/ethnicity, veteran status, political ideology and sexual orientation; (ii) identify what students, staff and faculty perceive as roots or causes of inequity on campus; and (iii) gather input regarding possible solutions or actions that the University should take that would change the respondents’ perceptions regarding equity on campus.” To gather information about the present state of the campus climate, the CCTF launched a survey in late 2005. Although the responses were very favorable, there were individuals who felt that there existed weaknesses in the fairness of treatment of individuals at Boise State.

In part as an action item in response to the Campus Climate Survey, a group of students, faculty, and staff developed a statement of values that identified the core values deemed central to the integrity of the institution and its members. The Statement of Shared Values was completed in the Spring of 2007 and was approved by the organizations corresponding to the participants in the process: the Faculty Senate, Professional Staff Senate, Association of Classified Employees and the Associated Students of Boise State University, the Deans’ Council, and the Administrative Council.
The Statement of Shared Values describes the level of expected ethical conduct for members of the University community. The statement commits the University community to act with integrity by upholding the shared values of academic excellence, caring, citizenship, fairness, respect, responsibility, and trustworthiness.

The following are ways in which we ensure the distribution, understanding and adoption of the Statement of Shared Values: (i) all new employees are provided with a copy of the statement, (ii) the Statement of Shared Values has been incorporated into the annual employee evaluation reviews, (iii) each year colleges and departments are instructed to review the University’s Statement of Shared Values with their employees, (iv) the statement is discussed at all new student orientation programs,10 (v) the statement is being incorporated into classroom syllabi and discussions, and (vi) the statement is displayed in all residence halls and administrative offices on campus.

The second Campus Climate Survey is scheduled to be conducted during the fall semester of 2009. We will use the 2005 survey data to benchmark our progress.

—STANDARDS OF CONDUCT & STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

In addition to the Statement of Shared Values, two documents have been created to describe the expected behavior for all members of the University community. The “Standards of Conduct,” instituted during Fall 2007, highlights Idaho statutes, the Board’s rules, policies and procedures, and the University’s policies and procedures that are applicable to employees in the University environment.11 Similarly, the Student Code of Conduct, which was last revised in March 2007, outlines appropriate behavioral expectations for all students in attendance at the University.12 The Standards of Conduct were developed in response to emerging events with legal implications. Amendments to the Federal Sentencing Guidelines called for an “effective compliance and ethics program,” thereby indicating that codes of conduct are important in assisting an organization in maintaining a healthy ethical culture. In addition, as a ripple effect of the passing of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act (which regulates publicly-traded companies), the U.S. Senate Finance Committee sought to develop mechanisms to ensure accountability in nonprofit organizations. Their focus was on internal controls, which emphasize tone in the higher levels of the organization. At Boise State, it was determined that the development of Standards of Conduct was timely and prudent in political and public relations terms, and also because

---

10 Orientation PowerPoint: statement of shared values
11 Standards of Conduct
12 Student Code of Conduct
it would be of substantial benefit in clarifying expected behaviors. The Standards of Conduct were developed by a committee representing major administrative areas on campus. Because the Standards are a summary of existing laws, rules, policies, and/or procedures, the committee sought only limited input from the campus community. The Standards of Conduct were emailed to the campus community from the President along with his message and the Statement of Shared Values. A copy of the Standards of Conduct will be given to every new employee and there will be an annual certification of compliance indicating that the Provost and Vice Presidents have instructed their deans and directors to review the document with the employees in their areas.

The Student Code of Conduct strives to uphold the Statement of Shared Values by providing guidelines for student behavior, by holding students accountable for violating community standards of behavior, by creating a fair process to address student misconduct, and by ensuring student voices are heard as they pertain to community standards and allegations of impropriety. The University helps to ensure a fair process for students going through the student conduct system by including students in the decision making groups that hold students accountable. The Code was designed to address behavior ranging in nature from academic dishonesty, to drug and alcohol use, to a myriad of other behaviors the University has deemed to be unacceptable for an academic learning community.

Behavioral expectations, as outlined in the Code, are disseminated to students through presentations during New Student Orientation sessions, via references in class syllabi, and through the University website and residence hall material. The Campus Planner references both the Student Code of Conduct and the Statement of Shared Values. The Student Code of Conduct contains the provision that it be reviewed at least every five years by members of the University community, including at least one student, one faculty member, and a staff representative.

Taken together, the Standards of Conduct and the Student Code of Conduct apply to all members of the University community including faculty and other academic personnel, staff, students, volunteers, contractors, affiliated organizations, and agents employed to act beyond the required legal actions of employees.
—CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Relevant University policies specifically address conflicts of interest. Boise State Policy 708013 “Ethics in Government/Conflict of Interest” summarizes the applicable portions of the State Statute on conflict of interest (Chapter 7 of Title 59 – Ethics in Government) and establishes procedures specific to the University. Boise State Policy 445014 “Conflict of Commitment: Independent Contracting and Outside Consulting” states “faculty members of Boise State University owe their primary professional allegiance to the University, and their primary commitment of time and effort should be to the educational, scholarly, creative, and service missions of the University.” The policy defines independent consulting and outside employment, and details the reporting requirements for doing work and receiving compensation outside the University system.

The Standards of Conduct15 also specifically addresses conflicts of interest, stating that (i) members of the University community are expected to devote primary professional allegiance to the University and to the mission of teaching, research and public service, (ii) outside employment must not interfere with University duties, and (iii) University community members who have certain professional or financial interests are expected to disclose them in compliance with applicable conflict of interest/conflict of commitment policies.

—ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The University relies on the SBOE’s clear and unambiguous definitions and policies16 regarding academic freedom, which state that “academic freedom should not be abridged or abused” and describe the rights that pertain to teaching and research and also describe the responsibilities that go along with those rights. Several University policies address academic freedom: Boise State’s Anti-harassment Policy (Policy #107017) states that:

“academic freedom protects the legitimate academic judgments of a faculty member made in furtherance of the institution’s educational mission and that intimidation and harassment are inconsistent with the maintenance of academic freedom.”

Boise State Policy 800018 states that the first amendment rights of academic freedom and freedom of expression apply to the use

13 Policy 7080 Conflict of Interest
14 Policy 4450 Conflict of Commitment
15 Standards of Conduct
16 SBOE Conflict of Interest Policy
17 Policy 1070 Anti-harassment
18 Policy 8000 Academic Freedom
of University information technology resources. The Boise State University Faculty Handbook,\(^\text{19}\) provides information to faculty on how to conduct classroom activities.

The Student Code of Conduct\(^\text{20}\) empowers students to examine and pursue knowledge free from discriminating practices. Specifically:

“No rule will restrict any student expression solely on the basis of disapproval or fear of his/her ideas or motives. Students and student organizations will be free to examine and discuss all questions of interest to them, and to express opinions publicly and privately.”

“Boise State University recognizes the rights of members of the University community to freedom of speech and assembly, and believes in fostering discussion and the free exchange of ideas at the University.”

In relation to faculty academic freedom, the Student Code of Conduct further states:

“The classroom is not an unstructured political forum; it is the center for study and understanding of subject matter for which the faculty member has professional responsibility and institutional accountability. Control of the order and direction of class, as well as control of the scope and treatment of the subject matter, must therefore immediately rest with the individual faculty member.”

---OFFICE OF INTERNAL AUDIT & ADVISORY SERVICES

Internal Audit & Advisory Services (IAAS), which reports functionally to the State Board of Education’s Audit Committee and administratively to the President, provides independent, objective reviews of University operations as a way of helping to improve the control and governance processes.\(^\text{21}\)\(^\text{22}\) IAAS uses the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations (COSO)\(^\text{23}\) framework, developed by the Treadway Commission, as way of providing reasonable assurance that the University has effective and efficient operations, has reliable financial statements, and is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. One component of the COSO’s internal control framework is the “control environment,” which involves integrity and ethical values, which arises from management’s philosophy and operating style, and which includes processes for managing and developing people in the organization. The control environment sets the tone of an organization and provides an ethical framework for employee behavior.

IAAS develops an annual audit plan based on a risk assessment. The plan includes regularly scheduled internal control reviews of colleges and departments on campus. The audit program used for

---

\(^{19}\) www.boisestate.edu/faculty/

\(^{20}\) Student Code of Conduct

\(^{21}\) http://www.boisestate.edu/internalaudit/

\(^{22}\) Organizational Chart

\(^{23}\) COSO framework
these reviews contains a component focused on the control environment so as to evaluate the “tone” of the area being reviewed. These reviews reinforce, in an on-going basis, the value of an ethical climate.

Accurate and Consistent Representation

9.A.3 The institution represents itself accurately and consistently to its constituencies, the public, and prospective students through its catalogs, publications, and official statements.

As much as humanly possible, the personnel of Boise State work to ensure that the University is accurately and consistently represented in its publications and statements.

The public perception or image of an institution must be accurate and consistent. This test of institutional integrity demands that Boise State practice “truth in advertising.” Typically, the accuracy of all publications, written messages and media accounts is assured by the unit producing the item. The Office of Communications and Marketing 24 serves as the clearinghouse for all press releases. It is the central source of campus information and produces publications such as the alumni magazine, visitor guide, and department brochures. Its professional communication specialists verify and fact check all work before distribution to the media, print publication or website postings. This office also coordinates all open records requests and has an online form to facilitate media and public inquiries.

The Admissions Office prepares and trains its enrollment counselors with accurate information to answer the questions of prospective students and parents.

Boise State’s webpages and department webpages are monitored by the University webmaster and must adhere to Boise State Policy #8040 regarding the format and content of webpages.25 That policy also states that,

“the Director of Communications and Marketing is responsible for coordinating all University information and publications and for assuring accuracy and consistency of message and image. The Director shall have authority over all University webpages and electronic publications.”

24 http://www.boisestate.edu/news
25 Policy 8040
The use of the Boise State trademark and terminology is controlled by policy and supported with the 2008 hiring of a director of trademark licensing and enforcement by the General Counsel’s Office.

All fundraising efforts are coordinated by the Boise State University Foundation, which helps guarantee that representations of the institution’s needs and programs are truthful and that contributions are administered in accordance with donors’ wishes. The SBOE and the University have policies regarding fundraising and the relationship of the foundation to the University. A memorandum of understanding describes the relationship between the Foundation and the University.

The undergraduate catalog is the responsibility of the Registrar’s Office and the graduate catalog is the responsibility of the Graduate College. Prior to each issue going to print, each office contacts all academic units with a request for corrections to the catalog. Neither office will make changes to listed academic programs without receiving notice of approval of those changes by the University Curriculum Committee or the Graduate Council. Neither office will list new programs or delete existing programs without notification of approval by the Office of the State Board of Education. See Standard 2 for detail about program approval of programs.

As stated in the Standards of Conduct, “for matters of questions relative to institutional policy, procedure, or position, the Director of Communications and Marketing is the official spokesperson for Boise State University. If an employee is contacted by a member of the media regarding an official matter, the media representative should be referred to the Director of Communications and Marketing.” Such a policy helps to ensure that consistent and accurate information comes from the University. However, the University promotes and encourages its faculty members to interact with the media regarding their areas of expertise. Faculty members are also encouraged to provide expertise and assistance to elected officials and government entities.
Commendations, Recommendations, and Action Plan

—COMMENDATION

• The leadership, the faculty, and the staff clearly demonstrate by their actions that institutional and individual integrity are of key importance. A solid ethical foundation is provided by the newly adopted Statement of Shared Values, the Standards of Conduct, and state and University policies and procedures.

—RECOMMENDATIONS

• The University needs to continue to invest resources and attention in ensuring that faculty members, staff members, and students are apprised of the behaviors expected of them. We must also ensure that appropriate checks and checks-and-balances practices are in place.

• The University should continue to assess its practices to ensure high ethical standards.

• The University should explore additional means by which to provide accurate and consistent information to the public and to prospective students.

—ACTION PLAN

• The University will join the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) in order to provide information about the University to prospective students and their parents.

• The University will revise the Campus Climate Action Plan based on new data collected in the 2009 reissuance of the campus survey.