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STATEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

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.

As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical 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 ensure 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.

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, even when it leads to findings and conclusions that differ from their own.

As members of an academic institution, professors seek above all to be effective teachers and scholars. When they speak or act as private persons, they avoid creating the impression of speaking or acting for their university. As citizens engaged in a profession that depends upon freedom for its health and integrity, professors have a particular obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public understanding of academic freedom.

Principles

Faculty members are bound by and honor the personal and professional standards of conduct articulated in this Statement of Professional Ethics and in the NewU's Code of Ethical Conduct in the NewU Policies Handbook. The following principles are designed to further explain what actions have the potential to lead to disciplinary action by the University.

- a) Faculty shall exercise caution when employing students for personal services. When a supervisory or evaluative relationship exists between a faculty member and a student, the extensive use of students for personal services which are unrelated to the faculty member's

professional obligations to the University, whether paid or unpaid, should normally be avoided.

- b) Faculty are strongly advised not to engage in consenting relationships with students as these relationships may result in sexual harassment allegations, conflict of interest, and/or disruption of the academic environment. (Additional information on the NewU policy on sexual misconduct definitions, investigations, and sanctions is included in the NewU Policies Handbook.)
- c) Faculty shall respect the right of their colleagues to freedom of speech and academic freedom. Faculty must recognize that the right to hold divergent opinions and to speak freely on controversial matters is fundamental to academic discourse.

Some speech goes beyond that which is protected by concepts of freedom of speech and academic freedom. Behaviors or verbal comments that are severe and pervasive enough to create a hostile, intimidating, or abusive work environment or classroom environment constitute harassment whether or not such comments are of a sexual nature. Harassment may take the form of direct ethnic or racial slurs, or abusive language toward a specific individual. Libel against a colleague or repeated attacks on the personal or academic reputation of a colleague or a student is harassment as well, specifically when verbal statements are made with malicious intent and with the knowledge that such statements are untrue.

When a statement is made that has the potential to damage a colleague's personal or professional reputation or a student's reputation, and that statement is later proven to be false, the individual who made the statement has a professional obligation to issue both a retraction and an apology.

- d) It is not possible to specify in detail all behaviors that might violate this policy. It is possible, however, to state a general standard for judging behavior in the workplace.
 - When arguments and conflicts with colleagues create a work-place atmosphere that is permeated with overt hostility, abusive behavior, or intimidation that prevents faculty or other employees from fulfilling their professional obligations, then the matter ceases to be an issue of collegiality.
 - When the general behavior of a faculty member, including comments of a purely verbal nature, creates a demonstrably hostile, intimidating, or abusive work environment for other faculty members, that behavior constitutes a violation of this policy.
- e) It is equally important to note what types of behaviors and statements are not actionable under this policy.
 - A faculty member's opinions, beliefs, attitudes or public statements on controversial issues may not be used as evidence against him/her in interpreting this policy.
 - Divergent or unpopular opinions are not violations of this policy. This resolution may not be interpreted in a fashion that conflicts with U.S. Supreme Court rulings on Campus Speech Codes.

- f) Faculty should respect the academic freedom of their students by evaluating students only on the quality of each student's academic performance. Faculty should also demonstrate respect for the student's academic freedom and recognize the right of students to hold views that differ from their own.
- g) Faculty have the responsibility to excuse themselves from all duties which involve a conflict of interest when they are in a position to evaluate colleagues or recommend their colleagues for promotion.
- h) Faculty have a responsibility to participate in grievance procedures, internal administrative hearings, and student conduct councils. In these instances, faculty recommendations carry the potential to determine a student's course of study or a colleague's ability to work in his/her chosen profession. Such responsibilities cannot be undertaken lightly. When one lacks legal experience or expertise, it is possible to be unaware of the gravity of serving in such a capacity. It is vitally important that faculty serving on grievance committees, conduct councils, or internal administrative hearings do not exert undue bias on the process, or allow personal biases to affect their judgment. Such behavior constitutes a conflict of interest. Conflicts of interest in such proceedings also occur when a person acting in such a capacity fails to disclose relevant information or relevant prior knowledge of the case, is engaged in an ongoing business relationship, a supervisory or evaluatory relationship, or a close personal, sexual, or romantic relationship with any party to the process.

Faculty should understand the accepted procedures through which an alleged violation of this Policy may result in disciplinary action.

Not all actions which potentially violate the general principles are necessarily severe enough to lead to administrative action. Good judgment is the key to enforcement of any university policy. In some instances, faculty should attempt to make use of the department chair and/or the Chief Academic Officer as a means of resolving disputes collegially and informally. When this is neither possible nor appropriate, and evidence exists that a faculty member has violated this Policy or other NewU policies, the Chief Academic Officer, or any other duly appointed representative of the administration, should communicate clearly in writing to the faculty member the nature of the violation and what changes in behavior are expected.

When a violation of this Policy or any other NewU policy is so severe that it threatens the ethical integrity of the institution or of the teaching profession in general, the administration may initiate dismissal proceedings for the first offense. It is expected, however, that formal proceedings will, under most circumstances, be instituted only as a last resort.

[End]