NEASC STANDARD ELEVEN
INTEGRITY

Introduction

This section describes the process by which Franklin Pierce University adheres to ethical standards in its interactions with students, faculty, administrators, staff, and the Board of Trustees, as well as its commitment to extend honesty and integrity to its relations with regulatory agencies, foundations, and the general public. This section also describes the University's activities to insure integrity in the areas of academic freedom, academic honesty, non-discrimination, conflict of interest, and grievance procedures.

Description

Franklin Pierce University exemplifies an institution committed to the pursuit of truth and integrity. The University has been recognized in the past by the John Templeton Foundation as a "Character Building College," validating and acknowledging the University's efforts in character and ethical education. Franklin Pierce continues to meet its responsibilities to both external and internal constituencies.

Franklin Pierce is committed equally to standards of rigorous personal and academic honesty for its students. For students at the College at Rindge, the importance of academic honesty is emphasized during Freshman Orientation with a discussion of, and signing by each student of, the Honor Code. The University has a written Plagiarism Policy which is made available to students and faculty through the catalogue, and is included widely in class syllabi. Cases of academic dishonesty are handled first at the faculty and departmental levels and appeals are heard by the Academic Standards Committee. Standards for minimal acceptable academic achievement and honors are published in the catalogue. Standards for faculty and University personnel are contained in the College at Rindge Faculty Handbook, in the CGPS Faculty Protocol, in the protocol for Faculty Standards for Promotion recently approved by the Board of Trustees, and in the Administrative Policy Manual. (Exhibits 11.1, 4.43, 5.3, 3.2, 2.16, 11.2)

The University is committed to the principle of academic freedom. A specific statement on academic freedom is contained in Article 6 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the University's Faculty Federation. This statement is amplified further by a statement on academic freedom in the Faculty Standards for Promotion document recommended by the faculty and approved by the Board of Trustees at their March 2008 meeting. Academic freedom in CGPS is defined in the Faculty Protocol**.** The ability of students to choose a program of study within approved guidelines is guaranteed in the University's catalogue and the Student Handbooks. (Exhibits 3.1, 6.4, 3.2)

Franklin Pierce has actively reviewed and established policies and procedures to promote equal employment opportunities and provide a non-discriminatory workplace for employees. The University established, in August 2005, and reviewed and reconciled in September 2007, its formal Policy on Non-Discrimination in accordance with the stipulations of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1984, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, (ADA), and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA). The University has also revised its Sexual Harassment Policy to better assist employees and students with concerns and complaints regarding sexual and other

unlawful harassment, and/or retaliation related to harassment. The enforcement of these policies resides with the compliance officers, the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Director of Human Resources. Personnel policies for the faculty are specified in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. (Exhibits 11.3, 11.4)

The Human Resources department coordinates the development of job descriptions with the various offices across the University, and new employees sign job descriptions as part of the employment process. Staff are typically reviewed by supervisors utilizing criteria developed by those supervisors. Faculty are reviewed under procedures described in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the Faculty Handbook, the CGPS Faculty Protocol, and the Faculty Affairs Committee guidelines for change in contract status or promotion (see Standard 5).

The judicial process for handling violations of the student Honor Code is described in Article IV of the College at Rindge Student Handbook. Judicial violations involve a multi-step process for determining guilt and imposing sanctions. The judicial process for handling allegations of student academic dishonesty is described in Chapter 5 of the Faculty Handbook and is also available to faculty online. The undergraduate Academic Standards Committee revised the process for handling plagiarism cases in 2006 to streamline and clarify reporting and appeals. Cases of plagiarism are reported to the Office of Academic Affairs, which may impose additional sanctions on repeat offenders. Cases of academic dishonesty are handled first at the faculty and divisional levels, and appeals are heard by the Academic Standards Committee. This appeal process is defined in the Student Handbook and managed through the Dean of the College at Rindge. CGPS has a similar process that closely mirrors the procedures at Rindge and was developed in consultation with Rindge staff.

Undergraduate students in CGPS are governed by the judicial processes of the College at Rindge. Graduate and Nursing students are governed by the judicial processes of CGPS, which are described in the Catalogue and are administered through the CGPS Academic Affairs Committee. These processes are managed through the office of the Dean of CGPS.

All human subjects are protected by the Institutional Review Board, which manages research proposals involving human subjects submitted by students, faculty and administrative staff following federal IRB and HIPAA guidelines. This board protects human subjects and confidentiality. While graduate (CGPS) and undergraduate (Rindge) units originally had separate Institutional Review Boards, a plan has been developed to combine memberships to take advantage of the broader experience and greater research emphasis of the graduate faculty.

The Library (see Standard 7) publishes online Copyright Guidelines regarding “fair use” of library materials and provides instruction on plagiarism in the use of traditional and electronic publications and documents. The first-year College Writing sequence (required of all Rindge students) reviews standards for citation of sources of information and documents.

Appropriate grievance policies and procedures exist for students, faculty, and employees in the Student Handbook, Collective Bargaining Agreement, and Administrative Manual. The grievance procedure for staff was approved in July of 1999, reviewed and revised in September of 2007, and is published in the Administrative Manual. A Conflict of Interest Policy for Trustees is published in the Board by-laws. The policy and compliance are managed by the Office of University Advancement. (Exhibit 3.3)

The Office of University Advancement maintains and cultivates relationships with individual donors, foundations, and friends of the University. The Alumni Relations Office regularly communicates with the Alumni Board. The Library has a policy with regard to external patrons.

Internal communication among faculty, staff, and students is varied and robust throughout both Colleges. Significant improvements and upgrades in technology have succeeded in enhancing the connectedness of the entire University system. The daily electronic bulletin, the RavenFlash, consistently communicates the life of the University to all internal stakeholders. Regular campus notices are produced by the President highlighting important news; regular campus meetings are held between the President, faculty, staff, and students to discuss important University news; and the broadly-representative Pierce Council has now completed its tenth year. Staff Seminar day has become a routine occurrence over the last five years.

A number of surveys are conducted annually or on a rotating basis at both the College at Rindge and CGPS. For example, an incoming student inventory to determine student academic preparedness is administered during Fall Orientation at Rindge, and students complete the NSSE, CIRP, and CLA surveys at prescribed points in their academic program. (Exhibits 4.45, 11.5, 4.46) An exhaustive survey of administrative staff was completed as part of the 2002-2003 Administrative Review process. (Exhibits 2.8, 2.9)

The Pierce Council completed a broad-based Academic Culture survey of students and faculty in 2003-2004. Results of these surveys are used to determine effectiveness of institutional operations, identify concerns relating to institutional integrity, and provide a basis for decision-making and allocation of resources.

Appraisal

Franklin Pierce University recognizes that it has an ongoing responsibility to insure promotion of initiatives that support the standard of integrity across its colleges, divisions and departments. The University recognizes that the hard work and honesty of its staff throughout this self-study process is itself one measure of integrity of which we are proud.

While the Office of Academic Affairs has a well-established process for responding to student academic grievances, the process is not well documented or well known to students. The recently revised process for handling student plagiarisms offers a model for how a more general grievance procedure could work. Such a model could also offer a mechanism by which the Student Honor Code and academic dishonesty issues could be more fully integrated and publicized.

Despite a more rigorous reporting process, plagiarism by students continues at a regular pace at both Rindge and CGPS. Most plagiarism cases appear related to the ease with which electronic formats permit copying of written material, but the illegal use of other digital images in such things as presentations and video productions remains unclear. It appears that it is time for a review of the University's standards for acceptable "fair use" of copyrighted material and intellectual property by faculty, staff and students and the development of consistent and public guidelines.

Three different student surveys over a number of years and interviews of Student Affairs staff corroborate the continued perception among students that some unfairness exists in student judicial process. The last comprehensive review of student judicial affairs took place in 1992. It appears that it is time to review the overall judicial process to insure that it meets the needs of contemporary students and is effective in its policies, procedures and outcomes.

An effective, well-managed Conflict of Interest policy exists for members of the Board of Trustees, detailing their responsibilities and expectations as stewards of the institution. The University is now considering a formal Conflict of Interest Policy for University staff, administrators, and faculty to reinforce the notion of integrity at every level of the institution.

The recently revised Faculty Standards for Promotion provide a description of the criteria and expectations necessary for promotion in rank that resulted from careful analysis by various faculty communities, led by the Faculty Affairs Committee. Recognizing that it has a responsibility to develop explicit procedures to implement the protocol, the University community worked diligently to develop a portfolio process that is at the heart of the new standards. The University will need to apply the same diligence to insure that this portfolio process and the data on which it is based are explicitly defined and rigorously expressed.

The University recognizes that it needs a more systematic approach to performance review for staff and administrators. Presently, performance assessment is largely completed at the discretion of supervisors, most often when problems arise. While this approach can be, and often has been, effective in dealing with immediate crises, it does not permit the regular and consistent goal-driven, results-oriented process that can be developed from an annual review, or periodic summative review process. Moreover, the development of such a review process with an array of evaluative instruments would enable managers to both clarify expectations and document effectiveness in a more consistent and rational way.

Projection

The Provost will direct Academic Affairs to develop an explicit written description of the process for adjudicating academic grievances. This written description will be made widely available to students, staff, and faculty through both print and online media. This project will be completed by October 2009.

The Director of the Library will coordinate a taskforce to develop a formal policy on intellectual property for students, faculty, and administration. The taskforce will be comprised Library staff, the Director of the Fitzwater Center for Communication, and members of the University Computing Advisory Committee. The taskforce will be convened by September 2009, and the policy will be submitted for the review and approval of the President and Senior Staff by the end of May 2010.

The Vice President for Student Affairs will create a taskforce charged to review the student judicial process to identify student concerns and propose strategies for improving process transparency and consistency. The taskforce will draw its membership from both Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. This taskforce will be formed by February 2009, and the final report will be due to the Vice President by October 2009.

The Vice President for University Advancement will chair an ad hoc committee charged to develop and institute a new Conflict of Interest Policy for staff, administrators, and faculty. The committee will be convened by September 2009, and the final proposal will be submitted for the review and approval of the President and Senior Staff by the end of May 2010.

The Dean of the College at Rindge will create an ad hoc faculty committee with responsibility to ensure that the Rindge Faculty Standards portfolio process and the data on which it is based are explicitly defined and rigorously expressed. The committee report will clearly detail and clarify the portfolio process and the data required for that portfolio. The committee will be created by February 2009, and the final report will be due to the Provost and faculty by April 2010.

The Director of Human Resources will create a taskforce that will develop and propose a formal and comprehensive performance review framework for all University staff and administration. The taskforce will be convened by February 2010, and the report will be submitted for the review and action of the President and Senior Staff by May of 2011.