

PERSONNEL

Personnel

Code of Ethical Conduct (6.9)

PURPOSE

The purpose of Tennessee State University Code of Ethical Conduct is to establish realistic expectations of behavior for all Tennessee State University employees.

POLICY

It is the policy of Tennessee State University that all employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Tennessee State University's commitment to excellence is imbued in the qualities of: **HIGH MORAL CHARACTER; HONESTY; INTEGRITY; LOYALTY; TRUSTWORTHINESS; DEDICATION.**

Further, the personal conduct of Tennessee State University employees is expected to facilitate a highly professional academic environment which epitomizes the standards of professionalism and academic achievement as set forth by these policies.

PROCEDURES

A. INTRODUCTION

The reputation of Tennessee State University for its honesty, fairness and academic integrity is vital to its continued growth and success. The very purpose for our existence places a special responsibility on each employee. In meeting our responsibilities TSU expects its faculty, administrators and staff personnel to be free of influential interests and activities that may serve as a prevention from acting in the best interest of the University. It is incumbent upon faculty, administrators and staff to conduct their business and personal activities in a manner that does not compromise the values, integrity, reputation and public trust enjoyed by the University. Compliance can be achieved only when business conduct conforms to the highest standard of ethical and lawful conduct. An obligation rests with every employee of Tennessee State University to render honest, efficient and courteous performance. Employees will therefore be responsible and held accountable for adhering to all TSU policies, rules, directives and confidentiality standards prescribed by the University. All employees have a duty to report, verbally or in writing, promptly and confidentially, any evidence of any improper practice of which they may be aware. Reports of improper practice or behavior should be submitted through the line of administrative supervision.

B. TSU MISSION

Tennessee State University promotes a diverse mission that is predicated upon unique historical characteristics and a commitment to excellence. Tennessee State University, an 1890 land grant institution, is a major urban and comprehensive university. This unique combination of characteristics land grant, urban and comprehensive differentiates the university from others in the state and distinctively shapes its instructional, research and public service programs. Tennessee State University promotes positive, lifelong learning, scholarly inquiry and an environment that facilitates cultural, intellectual, social and ethical development for a diverse population of students. In doing so, it seeks to develop the talents of its students including those with special academic talents as well as those who have educational, cultural, environmental or socioeconomic constraints. Tennessee State University develops leadership qualities that advance the application of knowledge toward the improvement of the quality of life for citizens of the state and the nation. In carrying out such a diverse mission the University requires standards of conduct and ethical behavior implicit in its commitment to excellence. Within these boundaries the University establishes a code of ethical conduct to be followed by each University employee. The standards contained herein are instituted as guidelines and cannot be all inclusive.

C. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

1. Tennessee State University policies create a favorable work environment in which all employees, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, physical disability or religious affiliation can enjoy equal opportunities in their employment relationship with the University. In an effort to maintain equal employment opportunities, the University adopted, implemented and periodically evaluates an Affirmative Action Program. All Tennessee State University employees are required to adhere to **ALL** aspects of the University's Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity policy.
2. Tennessee State University has established a strict policy prohibiting unlawful harassment of employees, including implied or expressed forms of sexual harassment. All Tennessee State University employees are required to adhere to the University's policy on sexual harassment.
3. Tennessee State University employees are expected to serve the University with dignity, respect, courtesy and loyalty.
4. Tennessee State University employees are expected to demonstrate and maintain the highest standards of decency, personal integrity, truthfulness and honesty and shall, through personal conduct, inspire public trust and confidence in the University.
5. Tennessee State University employees shall be fit for duty and strive to meet the highest standards of professional performance being prepared to work with others to make the most effective use of University resources.
6. Tennessee State University employees shall refrain from accepting preferential benefits based solely on public employment and shall refrain from giving preferential benefits to employees, relatives and citizens of the state.
7. Tennessee State University employees shall not accept fees, gifts, payment for experience or any other thing of monetary value which will give rise to: (1) the

preferential treatment of any student, employee or citizen (2) the loss of impartiality in decision making.

8. Tennessee State University employees shall not disclose, use or allow others to use confidential information acquired by virtue of employment with Tennessee State University or other confidential sources except as provided by law.
9. Tennessee State University employees are not expected to perform or engage in any situation that will have the effect of compromising the integrity of the University, or creating a conflict of interest, to include: (1) use of state property, equipment, facilities, time or investments for private gain (2) articulating employment provisions that reduces the effectiveness of University operations.
10. Tennessee State University employees are expected to maintain the public trust by exposing corruption and legal violations in any area.
11. Tennessee State University employees are expected to conform to all federal, state and local government legal responsibilities that are normally expected of a citizen of the state.
12. Tennessee State University employees are expected to maintain the integrity of higher education goals by encouraging the continuation of faculty and student involvement in research which advances knowledge and leadership in all academic and professional areas.
13. Tennessee State University employees may exercise constitutional rights as citizens to participate in political activities and to express opinions regarding controversial issues provided they do not create the impression they are acting or speaking as a representative of the University.
14. Tennessee State University employees must recognize that personal gain from public service is limited to respect, recognition, salary and normal employee benefits contracted with Tennessee State University and Tennessee Board of Regents.

D. RESOLUTION OF ETHICAL CONFLICT

In applying the code of ethical conduct, employees may encounter problems in identifying unethical conduct or in resolving ethical conflict. When faced with significant ethical issues, they should consider the following courses of action: Discuss such problems with the immediate superior, except when it appears the superior is involved. If the immediate supervisor is involved, the problem should be presented initially to the next higher managerial or administrative level. Contact with levels above the immediate superior should be initiated only with the superior's knowledge, assuming the superior is not involved. If satisfactory resolution cannot be achieved when the problem is initially presented, submit the issues to the next higher managerial or administrative level. If the immediate superior is the President, the acceptable reviewing authority is the Tennessee Board of Regents. It is advised that before any action is taken, one seek advice from an uninvolved and objective advisor. If the ethical problem or conflict still exists, there may be no other recourse but to resign and submit an informative memorandum. Except where legally prescribed, communication of such problems to authorities or individuals not employed or engaged by the University is not considered appropriate.

E. ADMINISTRATION OF THE CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

The procedures for administration of the Tennessee State University Code of Ethical Conduct are set forth in the above section of this policy and in the appropriate Personnel Policy. Administrative procedures pertaining to faculty are set forth in the Faculty Handbook. Administrative procedures pertaining to students are set forth in the TSU Student Handbook.

REFERENCES

TSU Policy 6.6.1 "Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity"

TSU Policy 6.6.2 "Sexual Harassment"

TSU Faculty Handbook

TSU Student Handbook