

Standard Nine

Institutional Integrity

Institutional integrity means a variety of things that, in the end, define the university's character. Does an institution adhere to the role of higher education in intellectual freedom and academic inquiry? Do its employees act in both a legal and ethical manner, and, ultimately, do its actions reflect its words in print and in policy? Each of these components affects the university's constituencies. This includes not only students, faculty, and staff, but also the beneficiaries of the university's research and public service activities; participants in noncredit programs; the state legislature; county and local governments, and the citizens whom they represent; employers of the university's graduates; individuals and organizations who provide non-state funding for the university; alumni; and other friends of the university. An institution's high ethical standards and integrity affect all those with whom the university has contact.

Academic Integrity

WSU's commitment to intellectual freedom and academic inquiry is apparent in many forms. Previous sections of this self study demonstrate a commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge consistent with its mission and goals. Further evidence is offered in the narrative section of Standards Two and Four. WSU has established and published written codes of conduct and ethics dealing with issues including faculty responsibilities and obligations, maintaining academic integrity in the classroom, student behavior in university housing, and misconduct in scholarship and research. These codes include procedures for reporting violations and complaints and for protecting the rights to due process, review, and appeal of those accused of violations under them. WSU's most recent mission statement and its 1996 Strategic Plan, reflect the commitment to fully support the principles of academic freedom and integrity. Each of these policies is systematically formulated and regularly updated.

Fair treatment policies involve the establishment and publication of clear written policies and procedures (including those that guarantee rights of review, appeal, and due process) for individuals involved in almost all facets of the university's mission—from grading/admission standards and degree requirements, and conduct rules for students, to hiring, position expectations, promotion standards, and disciplinary regulations for faculty and staff. These policies also explicitly set forth WSU's procedures for dealing with violations under them.

The Faculty Manual notes that the institution subscribes to the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure of the American Association of University Professors. The commitment is reinforced by the Freedom of Expression principle in the Faculty Code of Ethics included in the same manual. To a large extent the quality of the university depends on the quality of its faculty, so while each faculty member is recruited with great care, the quality of his or her work is also judged against strict criteria related to institutional integrity.

Personnel

Institutional integrity is necessarily reflected in the actions of its faculty, staff, and administrators. The effective functioning of the university depends on the skilled and conscientious efforts of faculty and support staff. The 1995 Office of the Attorney General's handbook sets forth ethical standards for all officers and employees of the university. Relevant to this is the general policy concerning discrimination, sexual harassment, and gender equity. WSU is clear in its ethical standards for

student and faculty/staff recruitment, student enrollment, faculty/staff employment, and retention practices for both students and faculty/staff.

WSU policies governing conflict of interest conform to standards established by Washington State legislative statutes. The Faculty Manual emphasizes caution in such matters as hiring, tenure and promotion decisions, honoraria and consultation work, copyright, and patent matters. The documentation also includes WSU's guidelines for managing conflict of interest in sponsored research.

Publications

Whether an institution does what its policies and printed material say it does is sometimes a matter of interpretation. However, WSU has endeavored to make its publications correct and timely and to accurately represent itself through its catalogs, publications, and official statements to its constituencies: the public and prospective students. WSU devotes significant resources to such forms of self-representation. Publications that WSU regularly produces include the Undergraduate Catalog, the Graduate Study Bulletin, the Summer Session Catalog, the Extended Degree Programs Catalog, and the admissions recruitment viewbook. A listing of Web sites related to WSU's policies, role and mission statement, and printed materials follows the List of Tables and Charts.

Summary

Perhaps the most important of the ethical standards that inform WSU's operations and planning are those articulated in the following statements of values from the 1990 Planning for the Second Century - Common Understandings: A Context for Planning at Washington State University:

WSU is committed to the pursuit of excellence - to striving for the highest feasible standards in each of its endeavors. Academic freedom and academic integrity are the basis for excellence in a university. Under academic freedom, faculty members have the right, protected by tenure and other safeguards, to express themselves freely as teachers, scholars, artists, and researchers. Academic integrity requires the unbiased pursuit of truth wherever it is sought, and the scrupulous application of disciplined intelligence in teaching, research, and service, without fear or favor.

The University is committed to serving the public interest and being responsive to public needs. Its service to the public must include criticism and counsel based on discerning exercise of its fundamental scholarly resources. The university accepts the principle of shared governance wherein those members of the community most likely to be responsible for or affected by new policies have significant voices in the formation of those policies.

The University respects and significantly benefits from diversity expressed through racial, ethnic, gender, cultural, disability, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic differences among the faculty, staff, and students. WSU takes seriously its responsibility to offer educational and professional opportunities equitably to all qualified persons.

Washington State University is proud of its accomplishments and aware of its challenges. As WSU moves forward into the next millennium, meeting and solving those challenges will define the university in many ways. However, with an eye on the future, securely rooted in the past, and holding fast to high ethical standards, WSU will surely remain a university of integrity; a university that seeks to uphold the goals of its land-grant origins: teaching, research, and public service.