

## STANDARD ELEVEN: INTEGRITY

The institution subscribes to and advocates high ethical standards in the management of its affairs and in all of its dealings with students, faculty, staff, its governing board, external agencies and organizations, and the general public. Through its policies and practices, the institution endeavors to exemplify the values it articulates in its mission and related statements.

### DESCRIPTION

The University of Rhode Island is dedicated to promoting the highest standards of integrity in every aspect of University life. This overriding commitment is reflected in the URI Cornerstones, developed by the Quality of Student Life Committee and endorsed by the URI Student Senate and the Graduate Student Association in 1994. The Cornerstones affirm that the University of Rhode Island is a principled community guided by values which form the foundation of our endeavors. According to these values:

- *We pursue knowledge with honesty, integrity, and courage.*
- *We promote independent choice, intellectual curiosity, open-mindedness, and free expression.*
- *We respect the rights and dignity of each individual and group.*
- *We reject prejudice and intolerance, and we work to understand differences.*
- *We accept personal responsibility for our actions and their consequences.*
- *We actively cooperate to improve the University, the State of Rhode Island, and the global community beyond our borders.*
- *We strive to be a community where the environment and property are treated respectfully.*
- *We seek to create and maintain an environment conducive to personal health and wellness.*
- *We work to develop skills, which promote lifelong learning, leadership, and service.*

**The John Hazen White Sr. Center for Ethics and Public Service.** To reinforce and exemplify these values, the John Hazen White Sr. Center for Ethics and Public Service, established in 1994, promotes discourse, education and scholarship on ethical issues and the character of service in public life (<http://www.uri.edu/artsci/psc/hazen.htm>). The center serves elected and appointed officials, faculty, graduate and undergraduate students throughout the state, and citizens in the community.

The center's programs and activities include workshops in ethics and public service for appointed members of the state bureaucracy, seminars for elected officials, including members of the state legislature, and interdisciplinary faculty conferences on integrating issues of ethics and public service into the graduate and undergraduate curricula. Areas of focus include liberal arts, business and law. In 2005, the center implemented a series of ethics workshops for department chairs, which drew widespread participation from colleges across the institution. In addition, the center conducts a series of citizen forums, inviting members of the community to engage in dialogue about various state issues, especially citizen responsibility for the character of public life. It is charged with promoting and supporting interdisciplinary research and scholarship on issues of civic and ethical responsibility.

The center also sponsors workshops at the University dealing with issues of academic integrity in the areas of teaching, research, and service. Participants engage in discussions designed to encourage the identification of ethical dilemmas and proposed resolutions in an effort to establish a procedure for ongoing dialogue that would enable us to create a culture in which the most common dilemmas no longer arise.

**Research Ethics.** Along with the initiatives implemented by the Center for Ethics and Public Service, the University of Rhode Island engages in a broad range of traditional Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) activities (<http://www.uri.edu/research/compliance/educandtrain.htm>). The Research Office, through the Division of Compliance, conducts workshops biannually on topics related to human subject and animal research ethics. Further, an online tutorial is offered through the Research Office home page. This web page provides links to other RCR resources, including the National Institutes of Health site, the Veterans Administration site on animal subject use, the University's conflict of interest web site, and tutorials to which the University subscribes through membership in the RCR Education Consortium. The Division of Compliance and the Institutional Review Board also engage in extensive outreach by conducting annual University-wide workshops and individualized training sessions upon the request of departments. Video resources are made available for departmental research ethics training. Moreover, members of the Institutional Review Board engage in regular in-service RCR training to keep abreast of changes in federal regulations.

With the goal of progressing beyond these traditional activities, in 2004 the University of Rhode Island poised itself to undertake a more systematic approach to integrating research ethics training into the fabric of the University culture. The Division of Compliance conducted a needs-assessment survey of all departments with graduate programs to determine the scope of ethics training taking place. Departments were asked to detail when, whether, and where training in research ethics occurs, the amount of time devoted to instruction, the nature and content of the training, the methods of instruction, and how the training was assessed. In addition, departments were requested to outline the extent to which any training addresses the nine core instructional areas defined by the Public Health Services Office of Research Integrity. The results of the survey indicated that most programs either lacked training in research ethics altogether or relied on a preceptorship model. While some of the behavioral sciences had more formal training requirements in place, all of the biomedical sciences adhered to informal training consisting of discussions with major professors. As a result, the University's Graduate Council has endorsed a recommendation by the Research Office to institute ethics training for all incoming graduate students at both the University-wide and departmental levels. The Policies and Procedures Subcommittee of the Graduate Council requested that the Division of Compliance work with the departments to develop methods for meeting this mandate.

That same year, the University of Rhode Island became one of 10 institutions to receive funding from the Council of Graduate Schools and the Office of Research Integrity to institutionalize research ethics training. By establishing a Research Ethics Fellows Program, the Graduate School sought to integrate the teaching of research ethics throughout graduate programs at the University of Rhode Island. The Fellows Program involves a collaboration between Graduate School deans, faculty, students and practitioners from local organizations and industries. After the training is complete, the faculty and graduate student mentors are responsible for conducting ethics training workshops for their home departments.

The training constitutes a series of bi-weekly, semester-long workshops for graduate faculty, graduate student mentors and practitioners. These workshops are facilitated by two Associate Deans of the Graduate School, the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Graduate School, the Director of Compliance and faculty who are teaching and research excellence award recipients. To date, the program has involved more than 120 faculty, graduate students and practitioners. Graduate student and faculty participants are selected following nominations by the Director of Graduate Studies for each of the departments. These faculty-graduate student teams serve as mentors for others in their departments. The practitioners, many of whom have long-standing ties to the University, have been from agencies such as Pfizer, South County Hospital, HybriGene Inc., Visiting Nurses of Rhode Island, and Pro-Change Behavioral Systems Inc.

The focus of the workshops is on the theoretical foundations of ethics, mentoring, human subject research with vulnerable populations, data sharing, conflict of interest, animal testing, informed consent, confidentiality, authorship, and research misconduct. There have been several measurable outcomes that have been shared with

CGS members and other awardee institutions. The Research Ethics Fellows Program can be replicated by other institutions and has been showcased at both Council of Graduate School and the Center for Academic Integrity Workshops at the national and regional levels. In 2005, an annual Research Week was established, which includes a day highlighting the University's commitment to promoting research ethics across campus. These efforts have been sustained using University funds following the completion of the grant in 2005.

The University continues to partner with the Council of Graduate Schools to develop an evolving quality assessment plan and provide tools to ensure program success by evaluating mentors before they leave the program and surveying departments after the training has been conducted by the mentors. By providing a shared program in ethical inquiry for graduate students from across the institution, the University will forge a common language that promotes an ethical culture for research.

**Intellectual Property and Conflict of Interest.** With regard to the products of research, the University has established policies and procedures for reviewing intellectual property rights and managing conflicts of interest. The Division of Industrial Research and Technology Transfer in the Research Office supports faculty, students, and staff in carrying out research sponsored by industrial companies. It aids in the development of research proposals, research agreements, confidential nondisclosure agreements, and material transfer agreements. These forms can be found at (<http://www.uri.edu/research/tro/techtransforms.htm>). The Division also assists inventors in identifying potential intellectual property licensees and in constructing license agreements.

The Division of Compliance, which serves as an institutional resource for students, faculty, and staff by providing information, training, and guidance on research-related regulations and policies in such areas as human subject protections, animal research, biosafety and boating and diving safety, coordinates monthly Conflict of Interest Management Committee meetings. In 2005, the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education (RIBGHE) approved the Public-Private Partnership Policy in response to the Public-Private Partnership Act passed by the Rhode Island Legislature. This act recognizes research as central to the mission of public institutions of higher education and encourages the marketing of inventions developed by members of the University, while continuing to ensure that Rhode Island's employees adhere to "the highest standards of ethical conduct, as embodied in the R.I. Code of Ethics (R.I.G.L. 36-14-1, et. seq.), and Regulations adopted by the Rhode Island Ethics Commission" (R.I.G.L. §16-59-26).

The Public-Private Partnership Act provides a mechanism for University employees to pursue research and development activities and also be involved in a relationship, financial or otherwise, with a company that has an interest in the research or development being performed by the employee. The new policy provides procedures to follow in making disclosures and requests for exemptions (<http://www.uri.edu/research/compliance/confint.htm>). The Conflict of Interest Management Committee reviews requests for exemptions and makes recommendations to the President and Provost regarding oversight necessary to manage the conflict or steps to reduce or eliminate any actual or potential conflict of interest. The President forwards requests to the RIBGHE. The Conflict of Interest Management Committee is composed of seven members of the University community, a representative from the RIBGHE, a member from an outside private institution of higher education, and a community member.

**Academic Integrity.** Beyond research, the University has policies and procedures in place to promote integrity and high ethical standards in the management of its relations with students, faculty, staff, the RIBGHE and external agencies and constituencies. Academic honesty is championed by reinforcing expectations of truthfulness and fairness in the *Catalog*, undergraduate and graduate student manuals, and in the *University Manual*. Issues of academic integrity are addressed in the Instructional Development Program's Course Planning Workshops, in the Research Ethics Fellows Program, and in the undergraduate and graduate student orientation programs. The University seeks to play a leadership role in encouraging integrity through its membership in the Center for Academic Integrity (CAI) and utilizes resources made available through

the Center. For example, the University will take advantage of the data and materials provided by CAI's new partnership with the online journal, *Plagiarism: Cross-Disciplinary Studies in Plagiarism, Fabrication and Falsification*.

**Academic Freedom.** Since the unconditional endorsement of The Statement of Principles of Academic Freedom and Tenure in 1940, the University of Rhode Island has fervently preserved its commitment to academic freedom. A description of faculty and student rights and responsibilities regarding freedom of expression is stated in the *University Manual*. These principles apply to both teaching and research, as well as activities carried out as a citizen that are external to the University community. Specifically, the *University Manual* states in (6.11.16) that: "Academic freedom means inter-alia that political beliefs, political activities, and political associations shall not be used as a criteria in reaching decisions about hiring, termination, promotion and tenure." Section 6.12.10 extends academic freedom to students seeking knowledge and understanding to inquire, conduct research, exchange ideas through discussion, publication, and public presentations as in the fine arts.

**Nondiscrimination and Diversity.** The University maintains a strong commitment to nondiscriminatory practices in all segments of the organization. Policies, procedures and practices regarding nondiscrimination can be found on all major web sites, including the Office of Human Resources' *Policy Manual*, *Student Handbook*, and the *University Manual*. These policies and practices address admission of students, recruitment, employment, evaluation, disciplinary actions, and promotion. Procedures for grievances by students, nonclassified employees, faculty, and staff are stated in the above manuals and handbooks. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) represents the faculty on issues related to peer review, salary equity, dismissal, and grievances. The *Policy Manual* can be accessed from the Human Resources web site listed on the University's home page. The *Student Handbook* can also be accessed from the student web site listed on the University home page. The *University Manual* is accessed through the Faculty Senate web site.

The University has a number of other organizations that support and maintain a community which values diversity. These include the President's Commission on the Status of Faculty, Students, and Staff of Color; the Black Faculty and Staff Association; the Association for Professional and Academic Women; and student groups such the Latin American Students Association; Asian Student Association; Cape Verdean Students Association; National Society of Black Engineers; Native American Students Association; Indian Students Association; Society of Hispanic Engineers; Muslim Student Association; Society of Women Engineers; Hillel; Intersarsity Christian Fellowship; Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Association; and International Collegiate Organization for Nonviolence. The special programs for Talent Development continue to enjoy widespread recognition for their successful efforts to attract and support a diverse student body.

In 2003, the University of Rhode Island became an ADVANCE institution after receiving \$3.5 million in funding from the National Science Foundation to promote the careers of women in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines. This five-year project is designed to improve and enrich the academic workforce through increased representation of women faculty in STEM fields. Project participants have been active in recruitment, faculty development, mentoring, and establishing a climate change to benefit all faculty. Since the inception of the grant, 18 tenure-track women faculty have been recruited in the STEM disciplines.

In 2005, the Provost's Office committed \$40,000 to the Council for Research to institutionalize incentive grants promoting the ideals of ADVANCE. In addition, the ADVANCE project developed a comprehensive faculty development program, a mentoring training program and a Faculty Fellows Program to develop high potential candidates who will transfer to tenure-track positions. To date, nine faculty fellows have benefitted from the Faculty Fellows Program. Project participants also developed a parental leave policy, resource information for child care, and proposed guidelines for dual career couples. ADVANCE works closely with the Women's Center, the President's Commission on the Status of Women and the Office of Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Diversity.

The University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer and prepares an annual affirmative action plan. The Affirmative Action Committee, Subcommittees on Sexual Harassment and on Racial and Ethnic Diversity and The Native American Committee also work to counter discrimination. A number of workshops open to faculty, staff, and students are offered regularly to address issues related to diversity. The fall 2006 workshops were centered on the theme of managing and understanding workplace diversity. Topics included teaching, working, and serving the needs of those from diverse backgrounds, diversity's opportunities and benefits, moving away from stereotypes, recognizing harassment and discrimination and prejudices, and learning the complaint process.

The role of diversity issues in the curriculum has been examined and addressed in the most recent revision of General Education. On October 24, 2002, the Faculty Senate approved a motion to require a diversity overlay as part of the General Education requirements. In 2004, a new General Education Program was implemented that included the requirement that two of the courses taken as part of a student's General Education program be selected from courses designated "D."

Promoting a more inclusive environment was the focus of University-wide discussion during the 1995–1996 academic year when the Faculty Senate engaged in extensive debate concerning whether or not to retain Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) on campus, given the inherent conflict between the ROTC's policy of excluding individuals based on sexual orientation and the University of Rhode Island's official admission policy which prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation. The Senate initially passed a motion to require ROTC to come into compliance with the University's admission policy or to remove itself from campus. The requirement was withdrawn, however, due to anticipated legal challenges related to the fact that the University's policy is not the official state policy. The effect of the discussions was increased awareness of the type of discrimination many members of our community endure and a renewed commitment to redress discriminatory policies and practices both inside and outside of the University community. On April 28, 2005, the Faculty Senate reaffirmed its commitment to nondiscrimination, but noted the right of the ROTC to freedom of expression. The Senate urged President Carothers to work with legislators to eliminate the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

In the area of athletics, all contracts and job descriptions for coaches and staff now include language highlighting compliance-related responsibilities and expectations. Following National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Certification in 2006, the Office of Human Resource Administration began the process of including similar language in job descriptions for non-athletic staff individuals who carry compliance responsibility for NCAA rules. The Athletics Compliance Officer, who reports directly to the President, has greatly enhanced the department's compliance manual (available in the workroom) since the last certification.

The University engaged intercollegiate athletics consultants Hall, Render, Killian, Heath and Lyman to perform an assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of rules, compliance systems, and procedures at the University. Their report was presented to the President (available in the workroom). In 2005, the President commissioned Lamar Daniel, Inc., consultants for gender equity and sports management, to evaluate the University's compliance status with the athletic provisions of Title IX. In 2006, the preliminary report was delivered to the President, who charged a committee comprised mostly of staff outside of athletics to address NCAA compliance oversight (available in the workroom). He also charged the Athletic Advisory Board with increased oversight in NCAA compliance and adherence to Title IX. A Title IX and Gender Equity Plan, drafted by the Athletic Department, is currently under review.

**Policies and Procedures for Appeals and Grievances** . On August 4, 2006, the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education approved revisions to the Student's Rights Policy that was originally passed on June 11, 1970, and last revised on July 19, 1984. The policy holds that:

- *Students have the right to study and work in an academic environment that is free from discrimination, including harassment based on race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation,*

*marital status, or qualified covered veteran, disabled veteran, recently separated veteran or citizenship status (except in those special circumstances permitted or mandated by law).*

- *Students have the right to hold and express opposing views without being penalized academically for the expression of their individual opinions. However, this does not in any way relieve students from meeting course requirements.*
- *Students have the right to be treated respectfully and courteously at all times and are entitled to their privacy with respect to personal matters subject to legal constraints and the legitimate needs of the institution.*
- *Students, when faced with serious disciplinary action, have the right to appropriate standards of due process.*
- *Students have the right to be represented in the decision-making process of the institution through duly established procedures and forums.*
- *Students have the right to evaluate the quality and range of education and services provided by the institution and to have their appraisals reviewed by those responsible for providing such services.*
- *Students have the right to consult with appropriate academic advisors in the shaping of their educational programs.*
- *Students have the right to petition in an orderly manner for the redress of grievances.*

Each public institution in Rhode Island is responsible for disseminating and upholding these policies. At the University of Rhode Island, The Student Code of Conduct addresses the rights and responsibilities of student members of the community. There is a Student Appeals Board for conduct violations, and each of the colleges has a policy and procedure in place for reviewing grade appeals that is consistent with the *University Manual's* established procedures for grade review. The University Ombud disseminates annually services offered to those in the campus community. The Ombud helps students and other members of the University community by giving needed advice and direction, investigating in confidence conflicting situations, clarifying matters, when necessary, by interviewing all parties concerned and by researching the problem, mediating, and suggesting compromises in conflicting situations, ensuring due process and recommending to the University administration procedures to prevent the recurrence of academic and administrative problems.

The University carries out performance appraisals for both classified and nonclassified employees according to the relevant collective bargaining agreements. Article XXIV of the collective bargaining agreement for faculty (<http://www.ele.uri.edu/aaup/facultycontract2004-2007.pdf>) outlines the grievance procedure, arbitration and standards for burden of proof under the grievance-arbitration process.

**Health and Safety Compliance.** University Health Services, along with the Counseling Center, are at the core of student welfare. Health Services provides comprehensive health care and prevention services that teach and promote healthy lifestyles. Health Services has developed a web site and programming that educates the student body regarding opportunities for health screening, information and classes on sexuality, nutrition, stress and addiction, including smoking, alcohol and drug abuse. The Counseling Center is a comprehensive, professionally staffed office, which seeks to help students effectively manage developmental tasks, situational crises, and personal problems. Both report to the Vice President for Student Affairs, whose division integrates those principles in all student activity programming. With the exception of the University Club and the Mosby Center, the University remains committed to not allowing alcohol in any University building on its campuses or at athletic events. Continued promotion of alcohol abuse awareness has moved the University from repute as the "Nation's Number One Party School" to notoriety as a "College with a Conscience" for promoting service learning. Additional improvements affecting health and safety compliance include the University's new Emergency Medical Services Center, while Public Safety Operations has moved into a larger, more modern space.

The Athletics Department has formalized reporting lines and responsibility for developing programs and ensuring awareness of health, safety, and sports medicine policies. The University has hired a coordinator of the NCAA Challenging Athletes' Minds for Personal Success (CHAMPS)/Life Skills program addressing health and safety issues for athletes.

In tandem, the Athletics Department has created a more comprehensive *Student-Athlete Handbook* (available in the workbook).

### **APPRAISAL**

Since the last self-study, the University has made great strides in promoting integrity as central to its mission. The activities of the Research Ethics Fellows Program and the John Hazen White Sr. Center have brought ethics to the forefront of public discussion and private debate at the institution. College and University-wide diversity committees and task forces have focused attention on the contributions a diverse student body, faculty, and staff make to the overall community. Policies and procedures regarding faculty and student rights and responsibilities at the institutional and board level are systematically reviewed and revised periodically both to address changes in law and ensure accuracy. New committees, such as the Conflict of Interest Management Committee, have developed in response to emerging trends in entrepreneurship and changing state ethics laws. In addition, the administration has been vigilant in upholding academic freedom in the face of both political and legal challenges. Finally, policies and procedures are clearly articulated and disseminated by email, in publications and through websites. At times, however, the location of policies on the web are not easily discerned by faculty and students.

Reports of violations of academic integrity have decreased over the past few years, but it is not clear whether this is due to a drop in the number of incidents or whether there is a lack of reporting.

### **PROJECTION**

The University will continue to engage in a variety of ethics training, diversity, and Human Resources programs. Efforts will be made to better coordinate activities. For instance, the ADVANCE Program, the President's Commission on the Status of Women, and the Women's Center are often working on similar initiatives without central coordination of their activities. Similarly, ADVANCE, Affirmative Action, and Human Resources each work on issues related to creating a welcoming and diverse climate. In the absence of a coordinator to oversee the various committee and office efforts, there is a risk of duplication of efforts and the University community feeling overwhelmed by being asked to respond to different groups regarding the same set of issues.

The University will continue to address issues of academic integrity and broaden its efforts to hold student and faculty forums. A student member has been added to the Institutional Review Board. Other committees dealing with issues of ethics and integrity will be encouraged to seek broader student input and participation. Research ethics programs will be expanded to include more undergraduate students.

The University Webmaster will be encouraged to make the policies and procedures as easily accessible as possible. Moreover, recognizing that rapidly changing technology is creating a gap between technology and oversight, the University will address policies related to privacy rights, academic freedom, and the public domain resulting from increased faculty and student use of forums such as FaceBook or My Space. Both students and faculty will be educated concerning legal and ethical issues related to communication technologies in a variety of venues.

### **INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

The University of Rhode Island aspires not just to meet the highest standards of integrity, but to serve as a model among public institutions in the state. Under the direction of the President and with the oversight of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee, the offices and departments of the University will continue to monitor and review their policies and practices so as to meet this aspiration.