

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
OUACHITA TECHNICAL COLLEGE**

SUBJECT AREA: **Personnel Policies and Procedures**

POLICY/PROCEDURE: **Standards of Conduct**

DATE: **March 1, 1993**

NUMBER: **2.40**

REVISION(S): **12/19/94, 8/24/96, 1/25/11**

As a public institution, the College must conduct its business in a manner that is beyond reproach. The actions of College employees must be, and must appear to be, proper. There are rules for accepting gifts, protecting confidential information, and participating in opinion polls and political activities. The College does not allow solicitation or distribution by employees or outside constituencies during working time. Similarly, employees should avoid conflicts of interest and refrain from conducting personal business on College time. The rules of conduct are more fully explained as:

1. Gifts or Favored Treatment

Employees should not accept a gift from someone not employed by the College. Do not accept favored treatment from anyone, internal or external to the College. This may give the appearance of impropriety and, depending on the situation, it may, in fact, be illegal. In either case, acceptance of a gift or favor is not appropriate.

2. Confidentiality

As a part of employee responsibility one may be aware of confidential information. It is essential that this information be treated properly and not released to unauthorized persons. Betrayal of this confidence on the part of any employee may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

3. Opinion Polls

Employees must not speak as an agent of the College unless it is part of their designated duties. The public may interpret a statement from an employee as an official statement from the College. Also, employees should not conduct or take part in non-College sponsored polls that would seem to show the attitude of the staff or students. Of course, one is not restricted from participating in polls conducted among the general public where the College is not represented. Under normal circumstances, the President is charged with representing the College to the public and, therefore, must approve any statements and/or materials designed for public disclosure.

4. Political Activities

The College is a public body of the State of Arkansas. As such, employees are restricted by law from using a College position or the College name in any form of political persuasion or influence. While acting as a representative of the College, an employee cannot engage in political activities.

An employee must not use a College position for political influence or give the impression that he/she is doing so. The political activities listed below are unacceptable to the College and are illegal;

- a. An employee must not give the impression that a political party, a political candidate, a political issue, or a partisan activity has the official or unofficial support of the College.
- b. An employee must not use a position with the College to directly or indirectly influence the voting or political affiliation of co-workers or students.
- c. An employee may not cause any co-worker or student to give time, money, loans, or gifts to the support of any political organization or cause.
- d. An employee cannot engage in any political activity during normally scheduled working hours or any other time while performing assigned College responsibilities.

5. No Solicitation or Distribution

Employees, students, or outside constituencies must not solicit, distribute, or post any unauthorized written or printed material to any employee during working time and on College premises without the expressed permission of the President. Staff should report all solicitations, distributions, or other transactions to the President or the Vice President of Finance and Administration immediately. No Solicitation or Distribution is defined to include the selling of goods or services, political activities, religious activities, military and college recruitment, posters, handouts, petitions, and group membership canvasses by organizations not officially recognized by the College. This definition applies to activities by any on-campus or off-campus individual or group.

6. Conflicts of Interest

As a state public institution, the College is keenly aware of its duty to protect the assets of the taxpayers of Arkansas. The College is required by law to give public notices of certain meetings, to follow a public bidding process in certain cases, and to disclose information that is normally confidential. Because of these duties to the public, employees must exercise extreme care that they conduct themselves in a manner that is proper - and which appears proper.

7. College Assets and Personal Business

Employees will use College assets only while performing assigned duties unless specifically authorized by the President. Employees must not use College assets, or employ the College name or other official materials such as the seal, logo, etc., in order to conduct personal business.

8. Outside Employment

While all full-time employees are expected to devote their time and efforts primarily to the College, it is recognized that a limited amount of outside work can sometimes be desirable. Outside work that will contribute to professional development or update technical skills is to be encouraged. Such employment, however, must not interfere with the discharge of the employee's duties at the College. It is expected that the employee will make clear, in all instances, that outside employment is their individual responsibility and that the College is not being represented. College assets are not to be used without expressed written permission.

9. Relationships

- a. The College is committed to maintaining a professional environment as free as possible from inappropriate and unprofessional behavior or sexual conflicts of interest, exploitation, and favoritism.
- b. Relationships between supervising administrators and employees they advise, counsel, supervise, or evaluate impose a special burden of responsibility and accountability. No individual who is in a position of authority over another shall use their position in an inappropriate/unprofessional, sexual, personal, or contractual manner in dealing with employees. Except in special circumstances, where explicit authorization has been obtained from the appropriate party, a supervisor should not employ anyone with whom he or she has or has had a past romantic relationship.
- c. The following faculty-student relationship standards are established for full-time faculty of the College:
 1. Faculty will treat all students with fairness and respect.
 2. Faculty should not exploit students for personal gain.
 3. Faculty-student personal relationships are unethical when they hinder any student's academic progress or create a situation in which any student is either favored or negatively impacted on grounds other than academic performance.

4. Relationships that exist prior to a student enrolling in the College should be disclosed to the Division Chair.
 5. Because faculty-student relationships are inherently unequal, faculty members should maintain strictly professional relationships with all students.
- d. Any incident of a suspected inappropriate relationship will be handled according to the procedures defined in COPP 2.32
 - e. The College will not tolerate inappropriate and unprofessional relationships, nor will it tolerate any form of retaliation against anyone who has properly participated in the investigation or resolution of such concerns. Any employee acting in a supervisory or evaluative role with respect to employees or students involved in an improper relationship or in any retaliatory activity will be deemed to have engaged in serious misconduct as defined in Policy 2.31.
 - f. **EXCEPTION** - The College recognizes that romantic relationships may develop between employees and that, if undisclosed, might violate this policy. In such circumstances, the employees involved in such a relationship should disclose it to an appropriate supervisor. In circumstances where early, voluntary disclosure is made, the College shall have the option of waiving this policy and addressing the new relationship through other means, including reassignment. While no right of reassignment or continuing employment of one or both parties is guaranteed, the College will, when appropriate, seek a resolution where no violation of this policy would result. This option is not available in the event of any improper relationship involving a student.

If individual conduct does not meet appropriate standards, corrective action may be necessary. Except for gross misconduct, the first step is normally counseling by the immediate supervisor. For more information see **COPP 2.32**.

AUTHENTICATION (Signature):	COPP
_____ President	1/25/11 (Date)
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