

IMPERIAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT BP 2715 Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice

Reference:

ACCJC Accreditation Standard IV.C.11

The Board maintains high standards of ethical conduct for its members.

The primary responsibility of the Governing Board in our District is to ensure learning opportunities for students in an equitable manner. The Board is charged to carry out legal and ethical obligations. As a result, the members of the Board and the Board as a whole ascribe to the following tenets in fulfilling the mission and goals of the District in their role as trustee:

- Recognizing that we represent the citizens of the District and maintaining an awareness at all times of the obligations of our office;
- Acting in the best interest of the needs of the students we serve;
- Recognizing that we represent the District as a whole, but also recognizing the special and individual needs of each service area;
- Always resisting the temptation to bow to the pressure to use the position of trustee for personal or other benefit apart from the welfare of the Imperial Community College District;
- Representing the interests of the District and the community rather than those of special interest groups;
- Honoring the opinions and values of others while maintaining civility;
- Creating an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect, and appreciation among students, faculty, staff and the community at large, and maintaining fair and equitable treatment of all employees;
- Maintaining an atmosphere in which controversial issues can be debated openly and respect given to all individuals;
- Recognizing that authority rests only with the Board and not with individual members;
- Delegating authority to the CEO as a Board
- Executive and confining Board action to policy determination, planning, overall approval and evaluation;
- Developing budgets that maintain fiscal integrity and stability for the District;
- Maintaining confidentiality of all privileged information;
- Conducting District business in public sessions except for those legal items spelled out in the "Brown Act" that are appropriate for a closed session;
- Maintaining open communication with the Superintendent/President and college communities and creating an environment where all necessary parties have the opportunity to stay well informed;
- Abiding by established policies and procedures in the execution of our duties;
- Being an advocate of the Imperial Community College District and supporting its mission;

- Acting only in the best interests of the entire community;
- Ensuring public input into Board deliberations; adhering to the law and spirit of the open meeting laws and regulations;
- Preventing conflicts of interest and the perception of conflicts of interest;
- Exercising authority only as a Board;
- Using appropriate channels of communication;
- Respecting others; acting with civility;
- Being informed about the District, educational issues, and responsibilities of trusteeship;
- Devoting adequate time to Board work;
- Maintaining confidentiality of closed sessions.
- Referring complaints and/or criticisms through the appropriate channels as previously agreed upon by the CEO and the Board.

All Governing Board members are expected to maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethical behavior and to adhere to the Board's Code of Ethics. The Governing Board will be prepared to investigate the factual basis behind any charge or complaint of Board member misconduct. A Board member may be subject to a resolution of censure by the Governing Board should it be determined that Board member misconduct has occurred. Censure is an official expression of disapproval passed by the Governing Board.

The Governing Board will promptly address any violation by a Board member or Board members of the Code of Ethics in the following manner:

1. A complaint of Trustee misconduct will be referred to an ad hoc committee composed of three (3) trustees not subject to the complaint.
2. In a manner deemed appropriate by the committee, a fact finding process shall be initiated and completed within a reasonable period of time to determine the validity of the complaint.
3. The committee shall be guided in its inquiry by the standards set forth in the Board's Code of Ethics as defined in policy.
4. The Trustee subject to the charge of misconduct shall not be precluded from presenting information to the committee.
5. The committee shall, within a reasonable period of time, make a report of its findings to the Board for action.

BOARD PROTOCOLS

1. Protocol for responding to needs or complaints expressed to an individual Board Member:
 - a. Be accessible; listen respectfully, and impartially.
 - b. If the concern is not urgent or does not have policy implications:

- i. Refer the individual or group to the appropriate college process/person.
 - ii. Do not make any promises to the individual or group.
 - iii. Do not attempt to solve the problem.
 - iv. Inform the College President and receive clarification.
 - c. If the concern is urgent or could have policy implications:
 - i. Refer the individual or group to the appropriate college process/person.
 - ii. Do not make any promises to the individual or group.
 - iii. Do not attempt to solve the problem.
 - iv. Inform the College President and receive clarification.
 - v. The College President will alert the Board President.
 - vi. Board officers, with the College President, will decide how to handle the issue.
 - 1. May request written report.
 - 2. May place on the Board agenda for further discussion.
2. Protocol for Responding to Needs or Complaints Expressed in Board Meetings during Public Comment on non-agenda items:
 - a. The Board President thanks the speaker(s) and acknowledges that the need or complaint has been heard by the Board.
 - b. If appropriate, the Board President may make a brief statement about the issue.
 - c. The Board President will ask the College President if there is any comment from the Administration.
 - d. The Brown Act prohibits the Board from discussing or taking action on any item not on the agenda.
 - e. The Board President will ask the College President to look into the issue and report back to the Board. The Board President will determine what form the report will take (e-mail, formal written report, etc.)
 - f. After receiving the report from the administration, the Board may decide to place the issue on a future Board agenda.
3. Protocol for Responding to Concerns Expressed during a Crisis
 - a. Be respectful; listen respectfully and impartially.
 - b. Refer the individual or group to the appropriate college process/person.
 - c. Do not make any promises to the individual or group.
 - d. Do not attempt to solve the problem.
 - e. Inform the College President and receive clarification.
 - f. The College President will alert the Board President.
 - g. Board officers, with the College President, will decide how to handle the issue.
 - h. Any written communication with the individual or group expressing the concern, or with the media, will be made by the College President and/or the Board President.
 - i. The Board may request a more formal investigation of the concerns.
4. Protocol for the Confidentiality of Closed Sessions

- a. The confidentiality of Closed Session creates a safe space for the candid discussion of appropriate topics.
- b. All participants in Closed Session are required to maintain the absolute confidentiality of Closed Session discussions.
- c. Any suspected breach of Closed Session confidentiality should be referred to the Board President.

BOARD NORMS

In public session:

1. Assume everyone means well.
2. Listen with an open mind; be open to new ideas; try it on.
3. Allow all opinions to be heard without interruption.
4. Demonstrate respect and support for one another.
5. Hold yourself accountable: be responsible; do your homework and follow through on assignments.
6. Approach issues professionally, not personally.
7. Seek consensus that is in the best interest of the District.

In closed session:

1. Assume everyone means well.
2. Listen with an open mind; be open to new ideas; try it on.
3. Allow all opinions to be heard without interruption.
4. Demonstrate respect and support for one another.
5. Hold yourself accountable: be responsible; do your homework and follow through on assignments.
6. Approach issues professionally, not personally.
7. Seek consensus that is in the best interest of the District.
8. Honor absolute confidentiality.
9. Create a safe space for open discussion and frank discussion.