

PROFESSIONALISM

The effectiveness of the college in meeting its mission depends upon the efforts of a professional faculty. Professional conduct should characterize the approach of instructors both to their disciplines and to all college activities inside and outside of the classroom. The cornerstone of the instructor's professional position at Greenville Technical College is academic freedom, which is guaranteed as follows:

"To ensure an instructional program marked by excellence, the South Carolina State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education supports the concept of academic freedom. In the development of knowledge, research endeavors, and creative activities, faculty and students must be free to cultivate a spirit of inquiry and scholarly criticism. The faculty members are entitled to freedom in the classroom to discuss their subject, but they should be careful to refrain from introducing topics unrelated to their field. Faculty and students must be able to examine ideas in an atmosphere of freedom and confidence and participate as responsible citizens in community affairs.

The State Tech System also recognizes that commitment to every freedom carries attendant responsibilities. The faculty members must fulfill their responsibilities to society and their profession by manifesting competence, professional discretion, and good citizenship. When they speak or write as citizens, they will be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. Professional educators must remember that the public may judge their profession and institution by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and make every effort to indicate they are not speaking for the institution.

At no time shall the principles of academic freedom prevent the institution from making proper efforts to assure the best possible instruction for all students following the objectives of the institution."

For additional information on academic freedom, refer to Greenville Technical College's *academic freedom policy 3-01*, located on Resources4me under Employee>Human Resources>GTC Administrative Policies, and to the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education's (SBTCE) *academic freedom and responsibility policy 3-1-100*.

The college employs instructors because they meet the three basic criteria of professionals: superior knowledge of their subjects, the interest and ability to facilitate student learning, and the judgment to handle classroom issues effectively.

Knowledge

Greenville Technical College expects instructors to know their specific subject matter well and keep current with new ways of looking at familiar topics and new strategies for teaching and learning. In short, the college expects its instructors to maintain a fresh relationship with their subject matter, which is reflected in the classroom. Courses should be structured around what the students need to know and be able to do, not what they can absorb with minimal effort.

Professional development is a shared responsibility of the institution and the individual instructor. Financial support may be available for attendance at professional meetings and conferences, professional dues, tuition assistance, return-to-industry, and on-campus professional development activities facilitated by the Center for Professional Excellence. An instructor should not expect full payment for professional

development activities, as it depends on the supervisor's approval and availability of funds.

The instructor attending a professional meeting or conference will receive support in covering classes missed. This can be accomplished by a tradeoff among colleagues, assigning appropriate independent study work during the projected absence, or using paid substitutes. The use of paid substitutes must be approved in advance by the appropriate academic dean and vice president and used only when the absence will be for an extended period.

The college has the authority and responsibility to require faculty to update their education and skills to meet accreditation guidelines and to remain current in the teaching field. When possible, educational training will be required over a reasonable period so that it will not be a burden to the instructor. If an instructor does not progress as outlined during planning conferences and performance appraisals, disciplinary action may occur.

Instructional Skills

Instructors are responsible for selecting and utilizing teaching approaches that facilitate maximum learning. Therefore, instructors should be familiar with a variety of instructional techniques and examine new ones. They should adopt new modes of instruction that are relevant and effective.

Judgment

The college monitors the exercise of judgment in many ways, including written evaluations by students and department heads/chairs and/or academic program directors, in-class observations, and informal reviews on how an instructor manages student problems. Instructors are expected to make difficult decisions and be willing to defend them if necessary. The college does not want instructors to shirk their responsibility by requiring minimal performance, awarding unearned grades, and granting all student requests as a means of attaining a superficially acceptable teaching reputation. The primary objective for instructors is to prepare students for work in their chosen career or the transfer to a senior institution. Truly effective instructors are those whom students later remember as those who challenged and best prepared them for life after Greenville Tech.

Conduct

In addition to professional knowledge, instruction, and judgment, every employee of Greenville Technical College is expected to exhibit behavior both on and off campus, which will enhance the positive image of the college. If, at any time, instructors exhibit behavior that is detrimental to the college or instructional program, they may receive disciplinary action up to and including termination.

As role models for the students we serve, it is appropriate that faculty remain mindful of the expectation of professionalism in all job duties and responsibilities. However, since professionalism covers many aspects, below are some specific areas of college-wide concern:

1. Any communication that could be considered offensive by most students and colleagues is unacceptable. Using profanity in the classroom or in any situation where students or colleagues are present, e.g., advising, registering, testing, or counseling, is unacceptable. Jokes, examples, and/or anecdotal remarks should be carefully considered before communication.
2. Inequity in the treatment of students is not acceptable. Discrimination in service to students is not acceptable. Social

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relationships, i.e., secret and/or romantic relationships with students, are unacceptable.

3. Before a job offer, criminal background checks are conducted on final candidates. Once employed, any employee charged with a criminal offense while employed with the college is responsible for reporting the arrest to their direct supervisor immediately.

Because faculty are typically judged in litigation as having significant power over students, they must avoid interactions that are, or appear to be, abuses of power. While the prominent public stature inherent in a faculty position requires exemplary behavior in general, it is critical that instructors do not:

1. have relationships with students in ways that would lead to evidence of conflict of interest, moral turpitude, or sexual harassment;
2. show favoritism toward or bias against students, in words or actions, based on non-academic factors such as appearance, lifestyle, beliefs, or economic status;
3. expect anything from students except reasonable academic effort and performance.