

# Lehigh University: Faculty Code of Ethics<sup>1</sup>

## 2.1. Preamble

An academic community's mission includes teaching, pedagogy, mentorship, research and scholarship, as well as intellectual and community service. As a member of Lehigh University, one joins a community that seeks to uphold and promote free expression of thought, free inquiry, intellectual honesty, respect for others' dignity and views, openness to intellectual creativity and innovation, and commitment to diversity and inclusion. The rights and responsibilities exercised within this community must be compatible with these ideals.

## 2.2. Commitment to Core Values

The Faculty Code of Ethics intends to uphold The [Principles of Our Equitable Community](#), to protect faculty academic freedom (R & P 2.1.1), to help preserve the highest standards of teaching and scholarship, and to advance the mission of the University as an institution of higher learning.

Moreover, the Faculty Code of Ethics intends to promote inclusive and equitable practices regarding diversity of age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, marital or familial status, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and veteran status. Diverse, inclusive, and equitable environments are drivers of innovation, creativity, and empathy.

Lehigh faculty are committed to excellence in all facets of university life—high-quality educational programs, cutting-edge research, student mentorship, and disseminating new knowledge—to benefit our students, the nation, and the world. To achieve excellence, faculty affirm that the following core values and conditions of campus life are essential to a functional, productive, and vibrant University.

**2.2.1. Shared Governance.** Faculty are committed to participating fully in the shared governance of Lehigh University. They will work together with its administration and staff to govern the University in a transparent, communicative, and responsible manner.

**2.2.2. Academic Freedom.** Faculty are committed to academic freedom, which enables us to freely teach our students and pursue academic knowledge within our disciplines; to

---

<sup>1</sup> This is a policy document and not an academic knowledge-generating document, so our main concern was to be as clear and concise as possible while addressing the various important and vexing issues under consideration. Since many other institutions of higher education have been involved in creating similar documents, we borrowed heavily throughout the Code of Ethics, drawing on language from similar documents prepared by the following academic institutions (in alphabetical order): Harvard University, Iowa State University, Kent State University, Sterling College (UK), Tulane University, University of California at Berkeley as well as the statement of Professional Ethics by the AAUP. We thank our colleagues in all these various institutions for their careful work, which served as a model for us. If other institutions find our document to be of value, we welcome their borrowing from it, as well.

conduct both basic and applied research; to develop technology; to expand the horizons of the understanding of our world; and to contribute to a greater appreciation of humanity. As part of this academic freedom, we are committed to the principle that granting tenure to faculty is essential for unobstructed freedom of thought, generating new ideas, and enabling engagement in critical discourses and analyses in our pursuit of knowledge (see R&P 2.1.1).

**2.2.3. Critical Engagement.** Charges of “bias” against faculty and institutions of higher education are common in contemporary political discourse. They are articulated by members of the public and in academic discourse – from students, faculty, and administrators – and are at times used to silence faculty engaged in critical forms of political, economic, social, and other inquiry, pedagogy, analyses, and speech. Professional standards already exist for assessing faculty regarding the quality of their research, teaching, and institutional service. This document reaffirms those standards, and rejects the politicization of academic freedom, including any efforts to silence faculty for engaging in controversial or critical research, teaching, or speech. Nothing in this Code of Ethics should be interpreted as stifling academic freedom, or undermining the professional standards that already exist for evaluating faculty for continued employment, tenure, and promotion.

**2.2.4. Ethical Conduct of Research.** Faculty are committed to conducting research at Lehigh University with the highest ethical standards and acknowledge our responsibility to pursue our scholarly endeavors ethically, to be accountable for our fiscal operations, and to present our scholarly and research products in a manner beyond reproach (see also University Policy on [Ethical Conduct in Academic Research, Scholarship and Creative Activities](#)).

**2.2.5. Academic Integrity.** Faculty are committed to maintaining professional integrity as educators and researchers. Faculty denounce any form of plagiarism, falsification of data, misrepresentation, or other acts which compromise the reputation of our collective work at Lehigh University (see also University Policy on [Ethical Conduct in Academic Research, Scholarship and Creative Activities](#)).

**2.2.6. Respect for All Members of the Community.** Faculty are committed to fostering an environment of mutual respect for all members of the campus community—students, staff, faculty, and administrators. We are committed to collegiality, mutual support, and respect for cultural and disciplinary diversity, essential for a functional, responsive, and thriving campus climate. We are committed to the free and pluralistic exchange of ideas, civil discourse, and support for the expression of differing opinions and perspectives in the pursuit of knowledge, all essential to our definition of a respectful campus community. Practices such as routine harassment of students, staff, or fellow faculty, bullying, name-calling are prominent examples of uncivil and disrespectful behavior.

**2.2.7. Diversity and Inclusion.** Faculty are committed to a diverse and inclusive campus community, which brings together people of different academic disciplines, cultures, intellectual perspectives, and beliefs. We welcome students, faculty, and scholars worldwide regardless of age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, marital or familial status, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. It is critical to the success of Lehigh University that we open our campus to the very best faculty, staff, students, and scholars from around the world.

**2.2.8. Welcoming and Safe Campus Environment.** Faculty are committed to maintaining a campus environment free of physical threats, verbal harassment, or other unacceptable behaviors so that everyone is safe as they pursue their studies, conduct research, teach, or provide service. We expect that all members of the campus community will be respectful and civil.

**2.2.9. Responsibility to Manage the Curriculum.** Faculty are committed to our role at the university, in which the faculty assume responsibility to continuously manage, review, and improve the academic curricula offered at Lehigh University, ensuring relevance and high quality.

**2.2.10. Responsibility to Mentor Students.** Faculty are committed to our role as mentors to the students participating in our academic programs. We strive to instill in our students the values of academic integrity and professionalism throughout their studies at Lehigh University.

### **2.3. The Faculty Members' Rights and Responsibilities**

The University community members' rights and responsibilities are not fundamentally different from those of other members of society. In support of the University's central function as an institution of higher learning, the administration's major responsibility is to protect and encourage the faculty in teaching, research, creative development, and public service. The authority to discipline faculty members in appropriate cases derives from the shared commitment by the faculty and the administration to preserve conditions hospitable to these pursuits.

#### **2.3.1. Faculty Rights**

- the ability to engage in free inquiry, exchange of ideas, and setting research agendas
- the right to present controversial material relevant to a course of instruction
- enjoyment of academic freedom (see R&P 2.1.1)
- participation in the governance of the University, as provided by R&P, including
  - approval of course content and manner of instruction
  - establishment of requirements for matriculation and for degrees
  - appointment and promotion of faculty
  - input for the selection of chairs of departments and certain academic administrators
  - the discipline of members of the faculty, and the formulation of rules and

- procedures for discipline of students
- establishment of norms for teaching responsibilities and for evaluation of both faculty and student achievement
- determination of the forms of departmental governance;
- the right to be judged by one's colleagues, in matters of promotion, tenure, and discipline, based on the faculty member's professional qualifications and professional conduct in accordance with the standards and processes stated in the Rules & Procedures of the Faculty of Lehigh University and principles of fundamental fairness.

The following sections identify key faculty responsibilities but are not meant to be exhaustive. It is expected that cases of adjudication, the lessons of experience, and the profession's evolving standards will promote reasoned adaptation and change of this Code.

### **2.3.2. Responsibilities to the Profession**

Faculty members, guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of their advancement of knowledge, recognize the special responsibilities placed upon them.

2.3.2.1. Their primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and state the truth as they see it. To this end, faculty devote their energies to developing and improving their scholarly competence in research and teaching.

2.3.2.2. They accept the obligation to exercise critical, professional judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge.

2.3.2.3. They practice intellectual honesty and adhere to the University Policy on [Ethical Conduct in Academic Research, Scholarship and Creative Activities](#).

### **2.3.3. Responsibilities to Undergraduate and Graduate Students**

2.3.3.1. The faculty members' major responsibility to all students is to impart knowledge and understanding of a field of study, develop in students appropriate and relevant skills, and do so according to the best standards of scholarship, pedagogy, and ethical standards in their discipline.

2.3.3.2. Faculty members demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors.

2.3.3.3. Faculty members establish and maintain an inclusive learning environment in the classroom, laboratory, and field (as defined in 2.2.6).

2.3.3.4. Faculty members avoid any exploitation of students for personal purposes either in or out of the classroom.

2.3.3.5. Faculty members deal with students justly and impartially, regardless of their physical, mental, emotional, political, economic, social, racial, or religious characteristics or participation in extracurricular activities.

2.3.3.6. Faculty members accept and carry out faithfully those duties central to their students' instructional commitment, including the prompt and regular meetings of classes and student advising and consultation.

2.3.3.7. Faculty members strive for a timely, just, and impartial appraisal of all student work. Faculty members owe students the right to a review of their work and grades given, and in case of serious grievance or dispute, the right of appeal (see R&P 3.8.7).

2.3.3.8. Faculty members secure permission and give credit for the use of original student contributions in their lectures or publications, in the same manner, and degree as for materials from other sources.

2.3.3.9. Faculty members encourage and protect honest performance by the student. They should pursue suspected cases of cheating and plagiarism by students.

2.3.3.10. Faculty members do not disclose confidential information about their students except as required by law or provided for by university regulations and procedures (see University's policy on the privacy of student records and FERPA law).

2.3.3.11. Faculty have a responsibility to educate and mentor students. Faculty must feel free to explore controversial views in their engagements with students in the classroom, and other student-related activities and interactions in order for academic freedom to be protected and flourish. This means avoiding the suppression of critical positions, hypotheses, viewpoints, and values. Civility is a significant value to promote in academic, scholarly, and pedagogical settings. But it must not be used as a weapon to suppress critical thinking and academic freedom.

#### **2.3.4. Responsibility to Other Faculty, Staff, and Administration**

2.3.4.1. Faculty members strive to treat faculty, staff, and administration with respect. Our coworkers are colleagues, and, as such, must be afforded the dignity we claim for ourselves. Faculty members should consider an honest discussion with the allegedly erring colleague as a possible first step in resolution.

2.3.4.2. Faculty members should acknowledge indebtedness to colleagues and other scholars by proper citation.

2.3.4.3. Faculty members should strive to be objective in the professional judgment of colleagues.

2.3.4.4. Faculty members should accept a fair share of faculty responsibility for the governance of the institution. Those new to leadership roles should seek out and adopt best practices for their positions and routinely seek feedback on their subordinates and superiors' performance.

#### **2.3.5. Responsibility to the University**

2.3.5.1. When faculty members engage in activities outside the university, it is their responsibility to make it clear, whenever possible, that they are acting as individuals and not as official representatives of the university (see R&P 2.1.1).

2.3.5.2. Faculty members maintain strict confidence in all departmental or university matters that have been agreed to be confidential through departmental and university policy. If any issue or topic is of such a nature that a faculty member must speak out, as a matter of conscience related to violation of university policies and federal state and local laws, this intention should be stated beforehand to all concerned.

2.3.5.3. Faculty shall not use University resources or facilities on a significant scale for personal or commercial purposes (see R&P 2.5 & 2.2.11).

2.3.5.4. Recognizing the responsibility to promote civil, respectful dialogue on campus, faculty retain the freedom and the right to disagree with other Lehigh University faculty, students, staff, administration, and individuals within and outside of formal Lehigh University sanctioned activities regarding decisions impacting the operation of the institution. Faculty retain academic freedom to have their voice heard in relation to statements they make under their official duties as employees of Lehigh University, and this freedom exists independent of the substance of the specific position or stance they articulate within and outside formal Lehigh University academic and workplace settings.

## **2.4. Procedures for Addressing and Resolving Infractions of the Faculty Code of Ethics**

### **2.4.1. Definition: Infractions of the Code**

Faculty Code of Ethics infractions center around repeated behaviors that disrupt a safe and equitable work environment and do not fall under either the [University's Policy Harassment and Non-Discrimination](#) (Title IX) or [Ethical Conduct in Academic research, scholarship, and creative activities](#). The Faculty Code of Ethics addresses repeated disrespectful or abusive behaviors directed towards another individual that may contribute to a hostile work environment. These behaviors interfere with one's ability to exercise rights and to effectively perform their duties and responsibilities. They significantly impair the community's pursuit of the University's central functions, as outlined in 2.1.

### **2.4.2 Procedures for Infractions of the Faculty Code of Ethics**

This section outlines the procedures that faculty or any member of the Lehigh University community should take to address infractions of the Faculty Code of Ethics, including seeking a fair and just resolution to an allegation.

2.4.2.1. The individual involved may bring their allegation to the appropriate department chair or may choose to bring it to the appropriate Dean's office or the Provost's office. If allegations are made against a department chair or other administrator, the next higher academic authority will perform the functions assigned in this policy to the chair (e.g., College Dean, Deputy Provost for Faculty Affairs, Provost, and President), with appropriate modifications.

#### **2.4.2.2. Informal Inquiry and Resolution at the Department and College Level**

2.4.2.2.1 The initial screening will begin with department chairs, who will determine if an inquiry is appropriate and if so whether the allegation can be handled at the department level or whether it should be sent to the Provost's office (see section 2.4.2.4).

If it can be handled at the department level, the chair will inform all parties involved and initiate a procedure for fact-seeking inquiry and resolution. The department chair is strongly encouraged to meet with all parties involved in an

attempt to resolve the allegation. Departments may choose to address the allegation via meetings of all the faculty involved or a subset of the faculty involved in the form of a mediated conflict resolution. Departments are encouraged to follow the procedures of resolving conflicts they have developed.

2.4.2.2.2. If the allegation is not resolved in a satisfactory manner within the department, the individual(s) involved may discuss it with the appropriate dean. The dean will review the allegation in consultation with the individuals involved and department chair, and attempt to resolve it by mutual agreement. If the dean cannot resolve the allegation, the process can be addressed to the Provost's Office.

2.4.2.2.3. If the alleged individual(s) involved in the incident make no effort to engage with the dispute resolution process initiated by the department or college dean, then the allegation will be brought to the Provost's office.

#### 2.4.2.4. **Initiation of Formal Procedure at the Provost's Level**

If the allegation cannot be handled at the department or college level, a formal initiation process can begin at the Provost's Office. The allegation under consideration needs to be submitted in a written format.

The Provost's Office will address what type of infraction this allegation falls under.

- Cases that fall under the [University's Policy Harassment and Non-Discrimination](#) (Title IX) are handled by the Equal Opportunity Compliance Coordinator (EOCC) already in place as specified in this policy.
- Cases that fall under the [Ethical Conduct in Academic research, scholarship, and creative activities](#) are handled by the research office.
- Cases that fall under infractions of the Faculty Code of Ethics will be handled by the Executive Faculty Senate Committee that will convene an appropriate faculty committee (see LU Procedures Regarding Infractions of Faculty Code of Ethics).

The committee will inform all parties and initiate an investigation of the allegation in a careful and confidential manner to protect all those involved. After careful consideration of the case, and appropriate discussion with those involved, the committee will attempt to deal with the allegation in a timely fashion.

The committee will submit in writing their recommendation to the Provost regarding appropriate sanctions. The Provost makes the final determination for sanctions by accepting or rejecting the committee's recommendation. Faculty have the right to appeal the decision through the Faculty Personnel Committee.

The committee will also provide annually a summary of the cases they considered to the Senate, the Ombuds, and the Deputy Provost for Faculty Affairs.

### **2.4.3 Sanctions for Infractions of the Faculty Code of Ethics**

If a faculty member is assessed by their department (or the Dean or the Deputy Provost for Faculty Affairs) to have engaged in repeated (at least three) infractions of the Faculty Code of Ethics, with no effort to engage in the informal dispute resolution process, then they may be subject to the following sanctions. Whatever decision is made, this information will be reported to the Dean's office and Chair, and this will be added to their annual review.

The following sanctions may be recommended:

- a. Mandatory training on relevant issues or community service
- b. Removal from service on university, college, and department committees
- c. Removal from leadership positions
- d. Suspension without pay for a time no longer than one academic semester.

The resolution of the allegation, whether formal or informal, will be noted in writing by the chair, dean, or faculty committee tasked to address these allegations, and submitted to the appropriate College Dean and Provost's Office.