

CRITERION FIVE –

*The institution demonstrates integrity
in its practices and relationships.*

CHAPTER 15 –

Institutional Integrity

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St. Charles Community College aspires to demonstrate integrity in its policies, practices, and procedures. This aspiration is reflected in the values statement of the College in terms of the importance assigned to “mutual trust and respect.” It is the intent of the institution that all campus and community interaction be characterized by integrity. Institutional Integrity was considered within the context of Criterion Five–“The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships.” A review of publications, and an examination of external and internal procedures, indicates that the College operates with integrity.

PUBLICATIONS

College publications were scrutinized for veracity, legality, and accuracy. Handbooks and policies were reviewed, as well as recent issues of the *Catalog*. All were found to meet expectations and to comply with applicable regulations.

HANDBOOKS

Student, faculty, and staff handbooks were reviewed for their adequacy, accuracy, and availability in terms of meeting the needs of their constituencies. Applicable grievance procedures were examined as well.

STUDENT HANDBOOK

The *Student Handbook*, printed annually, is free-of-charge and available to students at various locations across campus including the Information Desk and the Student Development Office, and distributed to students in College 101 classes. The clearly written handbook covers important information for SCC students, and is used as a supplement to the catalog and class schedules.

Services for students with accessibility requests and information for international students are addressed in the *Student Handbook*. A designated academic counselor is available for students with specific needs.

References to student grievances can be found in the “Grade Grievance Policy,” “Student Grievances,” and in the “Student Discipline and Due Process Code.” Each of the aforementioned sections provides clearly stated procedures. All policies and procedures for dealing with student problems follow accepted standards for due process.

Student Services has recently developed other handbooks for students that provide information on services and policies. These include an *Athlete’s Handbook*, aiding students who participate in SCC athletics, a *Manual for Administrative Procedures*, available in the Accessibility Services Office to assist disabled students, and a Fundraising Policy to assist student clubs, organizations, and athletic teams.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

This handbook is rewritten and reviewed periodically. Comments and suggestions from employees are solicited during the draft stages.

The handbook is given to all new employees, including faculty and student employees. A “Receipt and Acknowledgment” of the *Employee Handbook* is found in its first pages. After the employee signs the receipt, it is torn out and placed in the employee’s personnel file. The handbook can be found on the college web site. Certain sections, including the College’s Mission Statement, are highlighted and discussed in New Employee Orientation sessions.

Other sections include the Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest policies. The Problem Solving (Grievance) procedure provides a step-by-step process for resolving employee problems. A detailed grievance procedure for faculty is included in the current *Memorandum of Understanding*. The *Employee Handbook* is updated periodically and new policies are incorporated into subsequent versions as they are revised.

FACULTY HANDBOOK

The *Faculty Handbook* was last updated in 2000. It is an evolving document that continues to change in response to the issues and needs of the Academic Affairs Division. It is being moved to Web access.

The *Memorandum of Understanding* includes a grievance procedure specifically for resolving faculty issues.

The documents described above are clear and present specific actions and procedures. They are consistent with generally accepted procedures to protect individual and institutional rights, and are updated periodically to accommodate new policies and practices. Periodic updates should continue, but specific target dates should be identified and the task of revision assigned to a specific person or committee to ensure current valid procedures. Changes made to electronic form documents should include the dates of such alterations.

RESOLUTION OF INTERNAL DISPUTES

The *Student Handbook*, *Faculty Handbook*, and *Catalog* address resolution of grade disputes between students and the institution. Also included are procedures for “Sexual Harassment,” “Violation of Academic Integrity,” and “Disruptive Behavior.” Student concerns regarding classroom procedures and teaching styles are addressed in the *Catalog*.

Appeals procedures available to students include registration appeals (switching a grade of “F” to “Withdraw,” for example), financial aid (eligibility questions), and assessment for placement into developmental classes. The financial aid appeal process is printed in the *Catalog*. Information on registration appeals is available in the office of the Vice-President for Student Services; assessment appeal information is available in the Assessment Center.

Procedures for handling disputes between employees and the institution are addressed in the *Employee Handbook*. These include procedures for addressing grievances harassment, and discrimination. “Standards of Conduct and Discipline Procedures” are included as well.

Handbooks are widely available and distributed to new students and employees when they join the college community. The handbooks are reviewed periodically. The procedures for registration and assessment appeals should be more accessible for students and clearly stated in the *Student Handbook*, including instructions for submitting complaints related to accessibility issues.

POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR BUILDING DIVERSITY

AWARENESS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

St. Charles Community College promotes the awareness of cultural diversity. Through its programs, the College strives to create an environment that recognizes and celebrates multi-culturism. Programs offered during the academic year include films, seminars, and special exhibits. (See Exhibit A.)

These programs encourage awareness of cross-cultural issues. They seek to improve race relations and to increase global awareness. Lunchtime seminars and discussion groups provide a forum for students to make presentations and to exchange ideas. The College supports a Global Education Committee and an International Club, sponsored by the Foreign Language Department. The International Club offers films, exhibits, and an annual festival, among other activities. (See Exhibit B.)

The College informs the community about campus cultural events through mass media articles and announcements. For example, articles highlighting special attractions of the History Expo 2000 were published in at least five area newspapers. (See Exhibit C.) The College's publications and advertisements reflect the diversity of the service area population through photographs that include people of various age, racial, and ethnic groups.

NON-DISCRIMINATORY EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

The College includes a statement of equal opportunity in employment and admissions in its official publications, as well as on its web site. (See Exhibit D.)

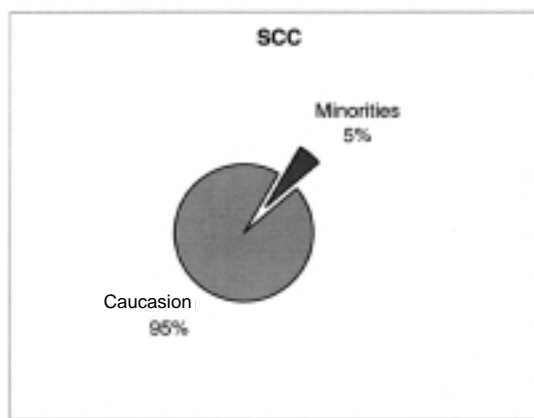
A list of available positions at the College is published weekly on-site and made available on a telephone "job hotline." The list is posted on the College web site as well mailed to various agencies that focus on minority employment. (See Exhibit E.)

The *Employee Handbook* contains the College's non-discriminatory policy and clearly describes the institution's responsibilities, as well as its expectations. The *Employee Handbook* includes the disciplinary procedures for policy violations and details the complaint process.

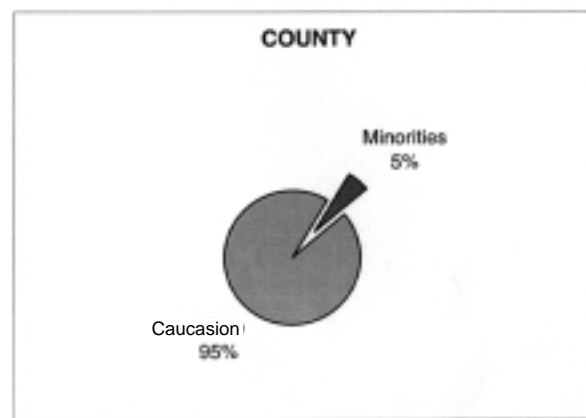
CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

While minority enrollment and employment at the College reflects the demographics of the county's public school districts and county population (about 5%), anecdotal information suggests a growing Hispanic population not indicated in current census figures. The College should stay abreast of this trend if it materializes and explore possibilities for outreach.

Ethnic Origin Comparison SCC & St. Charles County

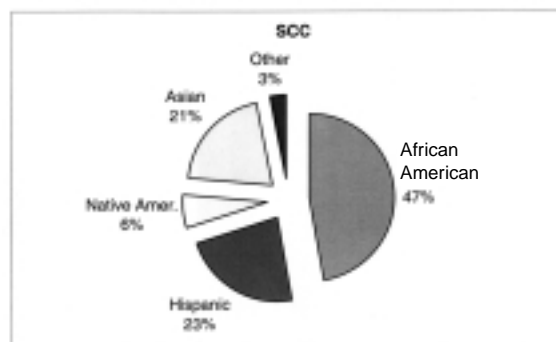


2001 Fall Semester Data



Data as of 2000 Census

A Breakdown of SCC's Minority Student Population



2001 Fall Semester Data

DIVERSE OPINIONS

Differences of opinion are valued and recognized. Within the internal governance system, committees reach decisions by consensus, enabling all voices to be heard. Students write articles covering a wide variety of topics and positions in the student newspaper, *The Student Voice*. A variety of views are presented in art exhibits, theater productions, and literary magazine entries. Students study texts representing diverse perspectives and cultures. (See Exhibit E)

The College strives to broaden awareness of multiple cultures through its educational programs. Non-discrimination policies are written and in place. The College is positioned to support changing demographics, and should consider the incorporation of specific language supporting cultural diversity in the Mission Statement or Values to reflect its commitment and practices.

The Employee Climate Survey administered in fall 2000 supports the College's commitment to diversity. In response to the statement that "The College values employee diversity," 60.6% of those responding indicated agreement; 14.9% indicated strong agreement. In response to the statement that "The College is free of racial/ethnic discrimination," 58.7% of those responding indicated agreement, and 23.6% indicated strong agreement. Similarly high rates of agreement occurred in response to statements on gender discrimination - 60.9% agreed that "The College is free of gender discrimination," and 24.2% strongly agreed, and on sexual orientation - "The College is free of sexual orientation discrimination," with 65.5% agreeing and 26.1% strongly agreeing. (See Exhibit G.)

All in all, the policies and practices of the College demonstrate equitable treatment and support "the building of a diverse educational community."

CONSISTENCY IN STATEMENT AND ACTION

One indicator of institutional integrity is the degree to which the communications of the College fairly reflect the mission, goals, and actual behavior of the institution. Much effort is taken to ensure that communications of the institution are accurate, and that there is complete disclosure and informed decision making. Communications are timely; catalogs are printed every two years; course schedules are printed approximately four months before the start of the next semester; advertisements are relevant to current programs and services; and job postings are updated weekly.

Publications, statements, and advertising are readily available, comprehensive, and attractive. To measure the college communications in terms of these parameters, two faculty members reviewed a variety of college publications. The reviewers used a Likert scale to rate the degree (1-5) that each publication embodied the above criteria. The reviewers utilized a consensus methodology and were able to reach consensus on all items. The completed *Institutional Integrity Rating of Communications* forms are available in the Resource Room. (See Exhibit H.)

The College, through its Marketing and Communications department, has won 9 national awards and more than 75 regional awards over the past 14 years for publications, advertising, media relations, special events, and other informational and marketing services. The most recent awards (fall 2001) included 11 gold, silver, and bronze medals from the National Council of Marketing and Public Relations (District 5) in nearly every category of internal and external communications.

The gold first-place awards were for the College's redesigned web site, the SCC newsletter called *The Maze*, the annual *President's Report*, a television ad series, a special event (Phase III Dedication ceremonies), and a feature/news article.

The publications of the College are clear and user-friendly and are consistent with actual operations of the College. Notices of all public meetings are posted and published within the timeframe and regulations required by the state's open meetings law.

In the past year, the Marketing & Communications Department completed work on 861 publications, ads, signage, news releases, and other materials—an increase of 13% over the previous year. Due to an ever-increasing volume in that department, some larger projects such as a series of new brochures to promote courses and programs can require many months from initial development through publication and distribution. The College is developing an annual planning calendar with a timeline and process to promote timely publication of major recurring informational projects; it will increasingly become a challenge to continue to add additional publications as the need arises.

The College's award-winning Internet web site has grown to more than 1,000 pages, and the College has developed policies for its development, maintenance, and monitoring. There must be continuing review of strategies and procedures for ensuring that information is current and accurate. In fall 2001, the College introduced an Intranet for internal use by faculty and staff. A wide variety of useful forms and reference documents, as well as minutes from the Board of Trustees, Core, and Branch committees, are quickly and easily available. The new Intranet provides everyone with access to the *Master Calendar*, assuring a more up-to-date internal scheduling and informational document than was possible with the hard-copy version.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

TRANSFER AND ARTICULATION

SCC works closely with a number of four-year institutions to establish 2+2 transfer (partnership) agreements. The Transfer Coordinator (in Student Services) is responsible for establishing transfer agreements between SCC and other institutions, which include both public and private schools. Most four-year institutions are very cooperative and take the initiative in making their transfer guides available. The Transfer Coordinator serves on the Curriculum Committee, and distributes information on new courses to four-year institutions as soon as it becomes available, to determine transferability. If courses are dropped from the curriculum, four-year institutions are notified in a timely fashion. The Transfer Coordinator (Articulation Officer) plays a major role in monitoring transfer issues related to the statewide *CBHE Credit Transfer and Articulation Agreement*. As described in the *Catalog*, the College offers assistance to any student encountering difficulty transferring SCC coursework. This assistance is available through the Office of the Vice-President for Student Services.

ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS WITH HIGH SCHOOLS

There are currently 30 articulation agreements with high schools from St. Charles, Lincoln, Pike, Montgomery, and Callaway counties. These agreements have been initiated to coordinate the transfer of selected courses at the high school level with certain courses and/or programs at SCC

for college credit. Advisory committees assist in the development of articulation agreements, and currently two high school business education teachers serve on the Business and Computer Science Advisory Committee. In addition, the Child Care Program has developed articulation agreements with several school districts in St. Charles, Lincoln, and Montgomery counties, and agreements are in process for Ritenour High School and Elsberry High School. There is an articulation agreement with the Council for Professional Recognition to give 6 hours of retroactive credit towards the Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate.

JOINT EDUCATION AGREEMENTS

In order to provide students with opportunities to complete programs not offered by the College, joint education agreements are maintained with three area institutions. These agreements allow students to enroll in general education courses on the SCC campus, and to complete program requirements at the campuses of participating institutions. There are agreements for the Respiratory Therapy and Paramedic programs at St. Louis Community College, and for the Fire Science program at East Central Community College.

The University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL) rents classroom and office space from SCC, an arrangement allowing students to complete the requirements for the Bachelor's degree on site. UMSL provides an administrator and secretary to support the program as well as an advisor for assisting transfer students.

SCC maintains an agreement with Franklin University to provide on-line courses at the SCC campus, leading to a bachelor's degree in selected fields. SCC identifies a Student Services staff member to act as a liaison between prospective students and Franklin University, promoting a seamless transition from one institution to the other.

The University of Phoenix has recently approached SCC regarding a possible 2+2 program for selected degrees, primarily in business. This program allows SCC students graduating with an Associate of Arts degree to transfer a block of credits that satisfy all lower-division general education requirements.

THE GATEWAY CONSORTIUM

SCC is a member of the four-college Gateway Consortium. The consortium agreement allows students enrolled at SCC, East Central Community College, Jefferson College, and Mineral Area College to participate in an online course option for an Associate of Arts degree. Representatives from these four colleges maintain a common website and review admission and financial assistance procedures. The Consortium provides a viable option to students who are not able to earn all credits by on-site campus courses at their home institutions. The Consortium administers common grant programs and has sponsored joint in-service programs.

All agreements are reviewed and signed by appropriate individuals from the schools involved, in order to provide clear and open communication with common understanding and expectations. They are coordinated through counselors in the Student Services division in order to provide centralized communication and consistency. Meetings are held periodically with appropriate administrators and faculty of respective institutions in order to maintain clear and accurate

communication. Copies of agreements are kept in the Student Services and Academic Affairs offices, depending upon the nature and scope of the agreements.

SHARED RESOURCES

The College shares resources with several other institutions and partners and provides appropriate support for its share of those resources.

The College contributes to non-instructional activities and services beneficial to individuals and groups external to the institution. These include community service agencies such as the St. Charles County Community Council and the Eastern Missouri Law Enforcement Academy. The College rents space to these agencies, and fees are charged to recover variable costs of operation. Fixed costs are not recovered, an example of the public service aspect of the College's mission.

The College provides an office for the Community Council in the Learning Resource Center and the provision includes phone, fax, and copy services for a reasonable fee. Council employees speak highly of the College and the support it provides. (See the agreement in Exhibit I.)

Shared resources with the Eastern Missouri Law Enforcement Academy include office suites, classrooms, telephone services and equipment, copy services, and mail delivery. These services and resources are provided at a reasonable cost. Library services are available to the Law Enforcement Academy staff and students. See the agreement and memo from the Dean of Learning Resources for detailed information. (See Exhibit J.)

The University of Missouri-St. Louis is another institution sharing college resources. SCC provides resources such as classroom and lab space, telecommunication room usage, office space, copy services, telephone and computer line access, and full library services for UMSL students. UMSL and SCC shared the cost of a fax machine for the library so that students could receive faxes of articles from UMSL Libraries. The library purchased two nursing journal subscriptions that support UMSL programs. (See the agreement with UMSL and library memos for detailed information - Exhibit K.)

SCC provides services to the Northeast Correctional Center in Bowling Green, Missouri through a contractual agreement. The College provides technical computer training as well as Adult Basic Education services. The College provides services to offenders including GED, literacy, and ESL support, through College faculty. (See the agreements between SCC and the Missouri Department of Corrections for detailed information about support and services - Exhibit L.)

The College maintains RTEC distance learning sites. Distance courses are offered at the Pike/Lincoln Technical Center, and Montgomery County High School. ITV equipment at each site, and at the College, was purchased using RTEC funds. The College employs site coordinators at each location to ensure that equipment is functioning and to notify the College if assistance is needed. The Instructional Media Office at the College provides technical support for the ITV equipment and courses. The ACE Center maintains three student computers at each of the three RTEC sites as well as a 10-computer lab at Montgomery City. Support is provided for RTEC students using WebCT online course software. (Please see the RTEC expenditure summaries for more detailed information - Exhibit M.)

TRANSCRIPTS

Transcripts issued by SCC conform to guidelines established by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO). Four years ago, the guide on the back of transcripts was changed to provide more detailed information including the College's accreditation. A statement clarifying credit hours as semester hours was added as well. Academic records are stored electronically and provided to students at their request.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

The Marketing and Communications Department serves the entire campus, carrying out the marketing and communications functions and advising the various departments and divisions, as well as the College administration, in matters pertaining to public information, advertising, media relations, publicity, and other strategies that help the College "tell its story" to its many constituencies. This department functions as an internal public relations, media relations, and creative agency, with a strong focus on publications, Internet (web site) communications, and marketing strategies. It directs the development of the College's marketing plan as well as various internal and community campaigns, special events, and promotional efforts. The Marketing and Communications Department is largely responsible for creating and maintaining a public image of service and excellence for SCC and for helping to advance the College's image in the community.

FOUNDATION

The College Foundation is a duly established, independent 501(c)3 organization with the sole mission of raising funds to support the College. The Foundation raises funds for scholarships and other College expenses.

CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS

Contractual agreements are signed with full disclosure to all parties involved, after review by legal counsel when appropriate. Copies of signed agreements are kept within the domain of the administrator involved. College-wide agreements are primarily kept in the Office of the President or the Vice-President for Administrative Services. Articulation agreements with other schools and colleges are kept and maintained by Student Services and Academic Affairs offices. Individual agreements, such as those made between a specific college program (Criminal Justice, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, etc.) and a specific agency in the community, are signed and held by the department chair or program coordinator for the respective program. Agreements include elements that meet agency and institutional requirements as well as the needs of specific programs.

The Board of Trustees has adopted a Conflict of Interest policy to assure clear and ethical responsibilities in all its endeavors.

The Board recognizes two collective bargaining groups. One represents the faculty, and the other represents non-exempt staff. Approximately every two years, the College and unit representatives meet and confer to establish a written *Memorandum of Understanding*. The most recent memoranda were agreed to and signed in spring, 2001.

STRENGTHS

- The College's practices and relationships are characterized by integrity as indicated by a review of publications and an examination of internal and external procedures.
- The new *Memorandum of Understanding* negotiated by the Faculty Association includes a detailed grievance procedure. Other grievance procedures are available and accessible.
- Procedures for dispute resolution, including Sexual Harassment, Violation of Academic Integrity, and Disruptive Behavior, have been developed and are available to members of the college community.
- There is a strong commitment on the part of many individuals and groups at the College to increase ethnic sensitivity and global awareness within and beyond the classroom.
- The College has a progressive, efficient marketing department that produces sophisticated publications. The structure to insure the accuracy of the policies and procedures in these publications is in place.
- The College has numerous agreements with other colleges and universities that support the high percentage of transfer students served by the institution.
- The College provides generous support for area institutions through shared resources.

CHALLENGES

- As some publications move to electronic form, changes and revisions need to be dated.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- Periodic review of handbooks needs to be made according to a set schedule, under the supervision of a designated individual or committee.
- Procedures for registration and assessment appeals should be published in the *Student Handbook*.
- Language reflecting the College's commitment to cultural diversity should be included in the Mission Statement or Values.
- The College needs to remain abreast of changing demographics, specifically the area's growing Hispanic population.