



Board Policy
Chapter 2 – Board of Trustees

BP 2715 CODE OF ETHICS/STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Santa Monica College is committed to the principle that higher education and lifelong learning should be available to every person who can benefit. Given this basic condition, the activities and deliberations of the Board of Trustees will be guided by this code of ethics.

The Board of Trustees:

- has as its basic function the establishment of the policies by which the District is to be administered.
- holds the Superintendent/President accountable for the administration of the educational program and the conduct of District business.
- is made up of individuals who will strive to work with fellow Board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation even when values and beliefs are divergent.
- is a unit of authority; Board members have no individual authority outside of official meetings.
- assures the orderly operation of the District by encouraging employees to make use of appropriate procedures before bringing their concerns to the Board.
- has the authority and responsibility to encourage the administration, faculty, and staff to be original and creative in responding to the needs of the college community.

The Board of Trustees maintains high standards of ethical conduct for its members. Members of the Board are responsible to:

- support and assist in fostering the most effective relations between the college and the community.
- never use his/her position for material gain.
- not use District funds, services, supplies, or equipment to urge the passage or defeat of any ballot measure or candidate, including, but not limited to, any candidate for election to the Board of Trustees. Initiative or referendum measures may be drafted on an area of legitimate interest to the District. The Board may, by resolution, express the Board's position on ballot measures. Public resources may be used only for informational efforts regarding ballot measures.

- not use or permit others to use public resources for personal purposes or any other purpose not authorized by law.
- devote time, thought, and study for effective participation and contribution in the decision-making process of the Board.
- comply with pertinent laws and regulations that deliberations in closed session are confidential and not for public discussion or disclosure.
- make decisions only after all facts have been presented and discussed. Statements or promises as to how one will vote prior to regular meetings are inappropriate.
- Abide by majority decisions of the Board.
- participate in state and national community college trustees' associations and in educational conferences, workshops, and training sessions offered by local, state, and national organizations to enhance his/her potential as a Board member.

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

Violations of BP 2715 Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice will be addressed by the Chair of the Board, who will first discuss the violation with the Board member to reach a resolution. If resolution is not achieved and further action is deemed necessary, the Chair of the Board may appoint an ad hoc committee to examine the matter and recommend further courses of action to the Board. Sanctions will be determined by the Board officers and may include a recommendation to the Board to censure the Board member. If the Chair of the Board is perceived to have violated the code, the Vice Chair of the Board is authorized to pursue resolution.

The Superintendent/President and Board Chair are authorized to consult with legal counsel when they become aware of or are informed about actual or perceived violations of pertinent laws and regulations, including but not limited to conflict of interest, open and public meetings, confidentiality of closed session information, and use of public resources. Violations of law may be referred to the District Attorney or Attorney General as provided for in law.

Also see BP 2200 Board Duties and Responsibilities, BP 2310 Regular Meetings of the Board, BP 2315 Closed Sessions, BP/AR 2710 Conflict of Interest, BP/AR 2712 Conflict of Interest Code, BP 2716 Board Political Activity, and BP 2717 Personal Use of Public Resources – Board.

References:

Education Code Sections 7054 and 7056;
 Government Code Sections 8314 and 54963;
 Penal Code Section 424;
 ACCJC Accreditation Standard 4.6

Adopted: May 1, 2000

Revised: March 2, 2009; June 6, 2017; June 4, 2024 (references only)

(Replaces former SMC BP 1230)