

# Ethics and Professional Responsibilities Guidelines for the Faculty of Champlain – St. Lawrence College

## Preamble

Teaching at the college level involves many responsibilities in addition to competence in one's subject matter and the effective presentation of course material such that students' opportunities to succeed are maximized. A clear statement of expectations regarding the ethical dimensions of the teaching profession as well as acceptable standards of faculty behavior in the various relationships involved is needed if these expectations are to be met. This document attempts to provide guidelines for the interactions of the faculty of Champlain – St. Lawrence College with students, with other faculty members and with the managers, professionals and support staff of the College. It is hoped that these guidelines may enhance professionalism and improve practice, if that is needed, and, at a minimum, be a reference for all individuals involved in situations where any question arises about the appropriateness of situations or actions.

In addition to THIS DOCUMENT, the College has produced others which touch upon various aspects of interpersonal relationships, both in and out of the classroom. These include

- The College Mission, Values and Vision Statement, which may be found on the Champlain Regional College Website (<http://www.crc-sher.qc.ca/home/>) by clicking on "Our Mission".
- The Harassment Policy, which may be found on the Champlain Regional College Website (<http://www.crc-sher.qc.ca/home/>) by clicking on "Documentation", then "Ethics and Conduct Policies". This document defines psychological and sexual harassment and contains procedures to be followed if one is harassed or is a witness to harassment.
- The Code for Student Conduct – St. Lawrence Campus, which may be found on the Champlain Regional College Website (<http://www.crc-sher.qc.ca/home/>) by clicking on "Documentation", then "Ethics and Conduct Policies". This policy deals with student relationships with other members of the College community and with student behavior outside of class.
- The Institutional Policy for the Evaluation of Student Achievement, which may be found on the Champlain Regional College Website (<http://www.crc-sher.qc.ca/home/>) by clicking on "Documentation", then "Academic Policies". This policy is concerned with the standardization of the evaluation of academic achievement and contains procedures for dealing with violations of acceptable academic behavior.

Any questions that faculty members may have regarding the interpretation and/or implementation of these documents, or any other questions concerning professional or ethical responsibilities should be addressed to the Dean of Faculty.

## Definitions

**College** shall mean Champlain-St. Lawrence College

**Student** shall mean any and all persons registered as students at the College

**Faculty member/professor/teacher** shall mean interchangeably anyone who has assumed teaching duties at the College.

**College Function** shall mean any task related to the courses of study offered by the College, including the courses in which the student is registered or the faculty member is teaching, any course-related activities, any

College provided services and all other activities sponsored, organized or authorized by the College, on or off the premises of the College.

## **Interpersonal Relationships**

All human relationships must be predicated on the recognition of the worth and dignity of each human being. The choice of a teaching career entails enormous responsibilities, especially to the students. These responsibilities are assumed by each teacher as well as by the faculty collectively. The assumption of this role involves not only the propriety of actions but also the perception of propriety of actions, lest the integrity of the teacher, of the faculty or of the College and the quality of education it provides be called into question.

In all actions and interactions that are or may be connected with the College, the teacher should act in a fashion that will maintain the honor and dignity of the teaching profession.

## **Faculty-Student Relationships**

The portion of the American Association of University Professors Statement on Professional Ethics that deals specifically with the student/teacher relationship is quoted below and is one that also applies at St. Lawrence:

*As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their disciplines. They demonstrate respect for students as individuals, and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Professors make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. They avoid exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students.<sup>1</sup>*

Standards of conduct follow from this statement and are predicated on the recognition of the inherently unequal nature of the teacher-student relationship.

1. Faculty members treat all students in a fair and equitable fashion without regard to race, color, ethnic background, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability or special need, national origin or ethnic background.
2. Faculty members treat all students with respect and avoid conducting professional business in way that would expose the student to insult, ridicule or shame.
3. Faculty members encourage the free exchange of ideas between themselves and students.
4. In the classroom, elsewhere in the College and at College functions, faculty members protect students from conditions that would be detrimental to learning, health or safety.
5. Faculty members avoid acting with favoritism or with any appearance of favoritism; this principle also governs social interactions, including the use of social media. It is recommended that faculty do not have "friend" relationships on social media with current cohort students.
6. Faculty members evaluate all students in a fair, balanced and equitable manner, basing evaluations of student work on academic performance alone.

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<sup>1</sup> American Association of University Professors. [American Association of University Professors Statement on Professional Ethics](http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/statementonprofessionalethics.html), available from <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/statementonprofessionalethics.html>; Internet; accessed August 2011.

7. Faculty members respect the confidentiality of information about a student unless there is a professional or legal reason for sharing such information.
8. Faculty members maintain an appropriate relationship with students at all times and in all settings, and avoid any personal interactions that would impact negatively on the student's academic performance.

## **Faculty-Faculty Relationships**

Again, the American Association of University Professors makes a worthwhile statement of the principles that should govern the interactions of faculty members:

*As colleagues, professors have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. Professors do not discriminate against or harass colleagues. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates, even when it leads to findings and conclusions that differ from their own. Professors acknowledge academic debt<sup>2</sup> and strive to be objective in their judgment of colleagues. Professors accept their share of faculty responsibilities for the governance of their institution.<sup>3</sup>*

The standards of conduct that are associated with these principles may exceed the requirements made of other citizens.

1. Faculty members, whether acting in their capacity as teachers or as coordinators, individually or in meetings, treat each other with courtesy, fairness and respect.
2. Faculty members recognize and defend their colleagues' right to academic and intellectual freedom.
3. Faculty members conduct themselves in a dignified and restrained manner, avoiding threatening or abusive language or behavior under any circumstances, either in provocation or response, in their dealings with colleagues.
4. In situations where critical assessment is necessary, faculty members are fair and objective when forming and presenting an evaluation of a colleague's work. Criticism is offered only in confidence and to the individual, the proper person or authority.
5. Faculty members do not denigrate a colleague's credentials, teaching skills, academic discipline, department or program, and shall in no way undermine the confidence of the students in the quality of the education that they are receiving from other teachers, departments or programs.
6. Insofar as they are willing and able, faculty members provide professional assistance to other faculty when asked.

## **Faculty-Staff-College Relationships**

The preamble of the Champlain Regional College Harassment Policy is the basis for defining the relationship among faculty and other College employees.

*The College recognizes the dignity of every person and respects the differences among persons in a diverse community. It also encourages the physical and psychological well-being of every individual in the College. Finally, every individual has the right to a work/study-related environment free from harassment.<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> Academic debt is understood at Champlain-St. Lawrence to mean that, as scholars, professors acknowledge the sources of ideas and the contributions of colleagues.

<sup>3</sup> AAUP, *op.cit.*, p 2.

<sup>4</sup> Champlain Regional College Harassment Policy (2006), p1.

Again, the standards of conduct that are associated with these principles may exceed the requirements made of other citizens.

1. Faculty members treat all other College employees (managers, professionals and support staff) with courtesy, fairness and respect.
2. Faculty members recognize the legitimacy and the responsibilities of the roles of College managers, professionals and support staff, and respect their contributions to the quality of the education provided to the students.
3. Faculty members agree, insofar as they are able, to work for the good of the College and to share in the responsibilities asked of the College by accepting membership in committees and organizations, by participating in meetings of these committees and organizations, and by cooperating with staff members.
4. Faculty members do not speak for the College or any formally constituted group within the College, nor do they give the impression that they speak for the College or any formally constituted group within the College, unless they are specifically requested to do so. If they are acting in such a capacity, they must take care not to represent their personal views as positions adopted by the College or any formally constituted group within the College.
5. Faculty members avoid engaging in outside activities that conflict with their obligations to the College.

## **Professional Responsibilities**

It is recognized that of great importance in behaving in an ethical fashion is the fulfillment of professional responsibilities and contractual obligations. This section summarizes the main responsibilities of teachers regarding workload and availability. It is not intended to replace the Collective Agreement or any corresponding jurisprudence on these matters.

### **The teaching load**

The Collective Agreement<sup>5</sup> to which all persons employed as teachers at Champlain-St. Lawrence are party defines the tasks of a teacher. (See Article 8-4.01) These are tasks that all teachers must perform on their own; teachers may neither delegate nor hire others to do these tasks for them. They include

- Preparation of course outlines
- Preparation and adaptation of classes, labs and fieldwork
- Teaching of classes, labs and fieldwork
- Support and supervision of the students who figure in the teacher's workload calculation
- Preparation, invigilation and correction of examinations
- Correction of assignments, papers and other work for which a mark is assigned
- Revision of corrections at the students' request
- Participation in pedagogical days or activities organized by the College
- Participation in department meetings and other activities needed for the accomplishment of department tasks

All teachers with full-time workloads agree to provide 173 hours per year of professional service; these are to be done within the teacher's normal hours of availability. For teachers who are part-time, the amount required is determined

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<sup>5</sup> Comité patronal de négociation des collèges (CPNC). *FNEEQ Convention Collective – Professeurs - 2010-2015*

*pro rata*. (Based on the entire period of availability, this represents approximately 4-5 hours per week for a full-time teacher.) Section 8.4-03 of the Collective Agreement describes this requirement.

Some examples of these services are

- Serving on program committees for which you are not given specific release time
- Providing extra learning assistance or support to students not normally included in your workload calculation
- Participating in program development, revision and evaluation
- Attending parents' night
- Participating in open house
- Evaluating courses taken by students who are transferring from another education system
- Mentoring new teachers
- Preparing reference letters for current or past students

Teachers who accept release time for the coordination of departments, programs or projects, or for carrying out projects have additional responsibilities related to those tasks. Consult the Collective Agreement, department rules and guidelines and other relevant documents to learn what these are.

## **Availability**

The amount of time that a teacher is available to the College is also defined in the Collective Agreement. For a full-time teacher, this is 32.5 hours per week (on average, 6.5 hours/day). For teachers who are not full-time, these hours are determined *pro rata* based on the contract. This extends from the first day of availability of the fall semester until the last day of availability of the winter semester; these dates are determined by the Labor Relations Committee.

From the first day of the semester (first day of classes) until the last day (the last day of the exam period as listed on the academic calendar), any holidays for students are holidays for teachers and there is no availability on those days. Before, after and between semesters there is availability, except on statutory holidays. Any teachers who wishes not to be available during these times should make arrangements with the Dean of Faculty

When the students are present and classes or exams are being held, it is expected that teachers spend most of their hours of availability at the College. When there are no classes or exams, the teachers need only be present at the College for meetings that they are required to attend or for functions that they need to perform.

Tasks to be performed during the hours of availability include the tasks inherent in the teaching load (listed above) as well as the 173 hours/year of professional services.

### **If a situation arises that appears to contradict the above guidelines and that is not covered in any other College policy, the teacher should take the following steps:**

1. Approach the teacher, professional, support staff member or administrator involved, explain your perception of the situation and attempt to come to a mutually satisfactory solution.
2. If that is too uncomfortable, ask to meet with the person in the presence of someone with whom you are comfortable and who you believe could provide some insight or mediation on the subject.
3. Failing that, and especially if the situation is very grave, speak privately to the Dean of Faculty or another administrator to explore your concerns.