

### 4.I-2023 Standards of Professional Excellence Policy

#### 1. Overview

- 1.1 Through the commitment of living the St. Mary's University's (the university) Standards of Professional Excellence, we are able to bring to life the mission, vision, and values that our vibrant, dynamic, and diverse community is known for. All community members working or acting as volunteers at or for the university share the responsibility and expectation of upholding and modeling the highest standard of professional excellence in their actions, decisions, and behaviours as representatives of the university.
  
- 1.2 It is the spirit and intent of the Standard of Professional Excellence policy to be a framework that guides our professional conduct to ensure that we are all creating a university culture where everyone is treated with respect, dignity, and fairness. A community that is a positive, safe, inclusive, and a productive learning and working environment is paramount. This policy is supported by university governance bylaws, policies & procedures, the faculty collective agreement, and applicable legislation.
  
- 1.3 This policy is not intended to limit academic freedom. Freedom of expression is an integral part of education at the university, while maintaining a professional environment in our campus community.

#### 2. Expectations

The following standards are not intended to be an exhaustive list but establish a minimum standard of ethical behaviour and professional conduct required of every community member. In some instances, individuals may need to rely on judgment and consultation, in which they are encouraged to consult with Human Resources and/or their Leader to determine an appropriate course of action.

Approval Authority	Responsible Office	Effective Date	Date Last Revisited
President's Council	Human Resources	May 24, 2023	

**2.1 Professional Diligence:**

- 2.1.1 All community members are expected to honour and diligently maintain the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct in all of their actions, decisions, and behaviours while performing their work responsibilities as a representative of the university. With a commitment to the success of our students, colleagues, and external stakeholders, individuals will ensure that they respond to all inquiries efficiently, with the intent of supporting their needs, and serving the community.
- 2.1.2 Individuals will ensure that they diligently exercise competence, care, objectivity, and honesty in their individual work efforts. Further, each individual must actively be committed to advancing and improving their individual competencies and body of work as a dedicated life-long learner and professional expert in their field.
- 2.1.3 As committed professionals, it is expected that individuals take responsibility for their own actions, errors, and successes. In addition to ensuring that individuals take full accountability for the assigned responsibilities and act within the scope of the authority assigned.
- 2.1.4 As community members we have the responsibility to maintain up-to-date knowledge of new and amended policies and to uphold the university's reputation of excellence and integrity, by respecting and complying with all university policies, as well as the relevant policies, laws, bylaws, and regulations of Alberta and Canada.

**2.2 Respectful and Inclusive Community Culture:**

- 2.2.1 Our unique, vibrant, and inclusive culture is a communal responsibility, and each community member is responsible for ensuring they create and maintain a working and learning environment that is positive, safe, and inclusive. A community culture that is free of harassment, bullying, discrimination, unsafe work practices, fraud, and any other action that diminishes the dignity of another. As university representatives, we are all expected to comply with university policies.

**2.3 Conflict of Interest:**

- 2.3.1 All community members have an obligation to carry out their duties and responsibilities in the best interest of the university and are to arrange external interests and activities, including concurrent employment or appointment to other offices, so as not to interfere or detract from the fulfillment of their university employment commitments.
- 2.3.2 Individuals must disclose and refrain from conducting their duties and responsibilities in any way that may be impartial or knowingly influence university business, administrative, academic, research, or other decisions in ways that give improper advantage to themselves, their personal interests, business interests, and/or individuals with whom they have personal relationships (i.e.: family members or personal friends).
- 2.3.3 Individuals will ensure that any and all personal or business interests do not conflict or interfere with the fulfillment of duties and responsibilities to the university. Outside employment that involves more than sixteen (16) hours per month between the hours of 8am and 5pm on business days, excluding vacation time, requires prior approval. University resources will not be used in conducting outside employment activities without prior approval. Advance approval must be granted for paid employment that arises from or is part of either the university's community partnerships or role obligations.
- 2.3.4 Any and all monies, grants, compensation, honoraria, and gifts associated with bodies of work or service completed that could be perceived as a conflict of interest are to be fully disclosed to the university. Prior to acceptance, disclosure is required to ensure compliance with appropriate regulations, policies, and best practices relating to academic integrity.
- 2.3.5 In the event that a potential or perceived conflict of interest arises, individuals must immediately report these as soon as they become aware of the conflict to both their immediate Leader and Human Resources.
- 2.3.6 The university believes that equitable treatment for community members requires that actual or perceived favoritism is avoided: individuals should not

be part of the recruitment, selection, review, or supervision of others with whom they are related, or with whom they have a romantic or close business or personal relationship.

2.3.7 As representatives of the university, community members should not solicit or accept, for personal benefit directly or indirectly any gift, loan, discount, or any item of substantial monetary value from any individual or business that is seeking to conduct or is currently conducting business with the university.

2.3.8 Small token gifts may be accepted, but any other items that fall outside of this guideline should be declined and returned in a tactful manner. Individuals should consult with Leaders and/or Human Resources on the appropriateness of any gift exchange when in question.

## **2.4 Confidentiality:**

2.4.1 All individuals of the community will help to ensure that, as university representatives, they diligently ensure non-disclosure of confidential, private, and sensitive information and materials and only use and disclose such details with expressed authorization and in alignment with university policy.

2.4.2 Whenever feasible, individuals should consult with their Leader if they believe they have a legal obligation to disclose confidential information before doing so. Also, the [Privacy Office](#) should be consulted regarding all employee-related information or unique requests for materials.

## **2.5 Financial Responsibilities:**

2.5.1 The prudent stewardship of all university funds (grants, tuition, donations, etc.) is the responsibility of all faculty and staff. It is important that all faculty and staff are familiar with the university's financial policies, processes, and practices.

**2.6 Records Management/Record Keeping:**

- 2.6.1 Everyone at the university will assist with the collection and maintenance of information records (i.e., physical records and electronic records in all media in all locations) to ensure that the information can be classified and managed in accordance with the university's data management system and retained only by the university, for as long as they are needed as defined in applicable legislation and university policies.
- 2.6.2 Records will be discarded accordingly by shredding physical documents or deleting data from a database or computer. Printed copies of electronic files will also be shredded where applicable.

**2.7 Protection & Proper Use of University Resources:**

- 2.7.1 All community members have the responsibility and obligation to protect university property and assets. This includes, but is not limited to, theft, carelessness, waste of resources and/or non-legitimate university business. If an individual becomes aware of any suspected incidents of fraud or theft, this should be reported to their Leader immediately for review. University resources may only be used for university purposes and never for illegal or unethical purposes.
- 2.7.2 Each of us as individuals has an obligation to protect proprietary information and follow safeguards and policies to ensure the assets are protected during and after their employment with the university.

**2.8 Use of Electronic Systems:**

- 2.8.1 All community members acknowledge and understand that by virtue of signing onto the university's electronic systems (i.e., email, computers, network), that they have read and will abide by all university policies, particularly those regarding appropriate use of our electronic systems. By using the university's electronic systems, you have committed to practicing good judgement to protect the integrity of the university's electronic

systems, access to proprietary programs, and electronic confidential materials.

- 2.8.2 Systems are intended to be used for university purposes. Occasional and reasonable personal use is permitted provided that it does not interfere with work/teaching performance. Individuals will honour acceptable use of systems based on information technology procedures and practices and are responsible to use these tools in a responsible, effective, and lawful manner. Information passing through or stored on university equipment can and may be monitored.

**2.9 Fair Dealing:**

- 2.9.1 All community members will make every effort to ensure that they deal fairly with the university's stakeholders, partners, and vendors. Taking unfair advantage of anyone through illegal conduct, manipulation, concealment, abuse of privileged information, misrepresentation of material facts or any other unfair-dealing practice is prohibited.
- 2.9.2 Members of the university community shall not solicit, accept, or agree to accept any benefit while exercising their official duties or their power of influence in favor of another.

**2.10 Environmental Sustainability:**

- 2.10.1 The university is committed to environmental sustainability and to actively seek ways to minimize its impact on the environment. This initiative is a collective responsibility of all individuals of the community. Individuals are strongly encouraged to consider management systems and procedures specifically designed to minimize the use of materials, energy, and other resources, to minimize the generation of waste, and to enable recycling and reuse of materials.

2.11 Health & Safety:

2.11.1 All community members play an essential role in making the university a safe place to work and learn, and are all expected to fully review, understand, and comply with the *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act*, and all Health & Safety policies and protocols. Every member is solely responsible to incorporate the applicable safety protocols in their day-to-day activities, comply with Health & Safety Legislation, report and address any safety hazards, and to act in a manner that does not create an unsafe or hazardous environment for others.

**3. Reporting**

3.1 All community members including faculty, staff, contractors, and volunteers are committed to sharing the responsibility to abide by the university's professional standards. Reports of wrongdoing are to be made in good faith. In all cases where a concern is raised and/or a formal complaint is made, a full review of the situation will occur to determine the appropriate steps of action. All community members are to report their concerns to their direct Leader and Privacy Office or Human Resources depending on the nature of the report. Reports must be received in person or via email. The complaint must be made in good faith, the complainant and respondent, as well as anyone providing information, will be protected from any form of retaliation by either colleagues or Leaders. Malicious, frivolous, or vexatious reports will not be tolerated and may be subject to disciplinary action.

3.2 A complaint may not proceed to an investigation in the event that the matter was effectively resolved through alternative processes such as alternate university policy provisions, collective agreement provision and/or employment contract.

3.3 In the event that the complaint is about Human Resources, the President will manage the complaint process. In the event that the complaint is about the President, Human Resources will work directly with the Chair of the Board of Governors.

#### 4. Resources

- 4.1 [2.A-2003 Statement on Academic Freedom](#)
- 4.2 [Freedom of Expression Statement](#)

#### 5. Definitions

- 5.1 **Frivolous** - lacking a legal basis or legal merit; a matter that has little prospect of success; not serious, not reasonably purposeful
- 5.2 **Leader** – Supervisor, program coordinator, area chair, team leader, manager, director, dean, executive
- 5.3 **Malicious**
  - having a desire to cause harm to someone
  - intention to harm someone or their reputation
  - causing them embarrassment and upset
  - motivated by wrongful and mischievous purposes
- 5.4 **Vexatious**
  - means without reasonable or probable cause or excuse
  - harassing
  - annoying
  - instituted maliciously or on the basis of improper motives
  - intended to harass or annoy