

ALAMO COLLEGES

ETHICS HANDBOOK

Integrity

Communication

Community

Academic Freedom

Accountability

EDITION 1.1
JANUARY 2009

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHANCELLOR

Dear Colleague:

The Alamo Colleges vision and mission are focused on the success of the students and the communities that we serve. Our Shared Values are intended to inspire our thoughts and actions toward fulfilling our vision and mission with integrity and accountability, and our Code of Conduct provides guidelines for upholding these values in the workplace.



This handbook includes our Vision, Mission, Shared Values, Code of Conduct, and other resources to empower us to make decisions that will benefit our students, enhance our communities, and fulfill our responsibilities as stewards of Alamo Colleges resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Bruce Leslie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr. Bruce H. Leslie
Chancellor

PURPOSE

This handbook includes our Shared Values, Code of Conduct and other resources to aid in fulfilling our commitment to excellence. It includes specific examples and links to policies and other resources to help empower us to live by the high ethical standards that are essential for fulfilling our vision and mission.

Following our Shared Values and the Code of Conduct contained in this handbook is an integral part of our commitment to:

- the highest quality education
- highly-qualified faculty and staff
- proper stewardship of resources, gifts, grants and other forms of support
- personal accountability

Our actions must meet these standards. We will not condone a practice on the basis that the practice is “customary,” “easy,” “expedient,” or “we’ve always done it that way,” if the practice is not consistent with our Vision, Mission, Shared Values and Code of Conduct.

ALAMO COLLEGES VISION AND MISSION

The [vision](#) of the Alamo Colleges is to become the best in the nation.

The [mission](#) of the Alamo Colleges is to empower our diverse communities for success.

ALAMO COLLEGES SHARED VALUES

We, the members of the Alamo Colleges, are committed to building our individual and collective character through a set of shared values. These values guide and inspire our thoughts and actions, fulfilling our vision and mission in service to our students and communities.

- **Integrity:** We have the courage to act ethically, building a culture of trust and respect.
- **Communication:** We engage in open and transparent communication, information sharing and collaboration.
- **Community:** We commit to a joyful culture of learning and service where unity in diversity occurs through mutual respect, cooperation and accessibility.
- **Academic Freedom:** We value creativity, growth and transformation through vigorous inquiry and a free exchange of ideas for all.
- **Accountability:** We take responsibility for our actions and strive for continuous learning and improvement.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Our Code of Conduct helps us uphold our Shared Values by providing guidance for ethical decision making in the workplace. It is a statement of the ethical standards we use as the basis for our decisions and actions.

ADHERENCE TO LAW AND ALAMO COLLEGES POLICIES

Employees will follow applicable laws, regulations, professional standards, and Alamo Colleges policies and Code of Conduct.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We will respect individual privacy and the confidentiality of Alamo Colleges information. Because we are a public institution, much of the business affairs and official acts of public officials and employees of the Alamo Colleges are subject to the Texas Public Information Act, and employees have no expectation of privacy when using Alamo Colleges equipment or systems. However, Alamo Colleges employees are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of Alamo Colleges information, and for using the information only for conducting Alamo Colleges business in the course of their assigned duties.

We must exercise responsible, ethical behavior when using the Alamo Colleges' computers, networks, or other information resources, including the proper storage, access, control, and disposal of information accessed by or presented to us in any form.

Promptly forward information requests from anyone not employed by the Alamo Colleges to publicinformationactrequests@alamo.edu. It is important to forward information requests as soon as they are received in order for the Alamo Colleges to meet possible deadlines related to public information request procedures. More information on information requests is available at [http://www.alamo.edu/main/html/PIA Notice for ACC home page.pdf](http://www.alamo.edu/main/html/PIA_Note_for_ACC_home_page.pdf). Questions regarding the confidentiality of employee or student information should be directed to the District Office of Legal Services. Additional guidance is available in Chancellor's Clarification 08-02 at http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/ComplianceAnalyst/Directives/Chancellor's-Clarification_08-02.pdf.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest is a conflict between the personal interests and the professional responsibilities of an Alamo Colleges employee. A conflict of interest may occur if an individual's judgment is, might be, or can appear to be influenced by personal interests, or if a reasonable person would perceive a conflict of interest.

The first step in managing a potential conflict of interest is to notify your department chair or supervisor that the potential for conflict exists. It is a reality that conflicts may occur, and not all conflicts are bad. If a potential conflict is made known to the supervisor, the situation can be addressed appropriately. Additional information on conflict of interest can be found in Policy D.2.4 - Nepotism, Conflicts of Interest at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/D.2.4%20Policy.pdf>; Procedure D.2.4.2 - Conflicts of Interest at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/D.2.4.2%20Procedure.pdf>; and Procedure D.2.4.3 - Outside Employment at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/D.2.4.3%20Procedure.pdf>.

COPYRIGHTS AND LOGOS

Copyright is a form of protection provided by the laws of the United States to the authors of “original works of authorship,” including literary, dramatic, musical, artistic, and certain other intellectual works. This protection is available to both published and unpublished works. The Alamo Colleges adhere to the requirements of U.S. copyright law and also abide by licensing restrictions that govern the copying of software. Employees may not use copyrighted material without first obtaining written permission prior to duplication and distribution. The Alamo Community College District name and the names of each Alamo Colleges college may not be used without written permission from the Alamo Colleges. No one may use any of the names or logos of the Alamo Colleges or any Alamo Colleges colleges in a manner that endorses any product or service, either explicitly or implicitly, without prior written permission from the Alamo Colleges.

An exception to the exclusive rights enjoyed by copyright owners is the doctrine of fair use. The fair use of a copyrighted work for purposes of teaching, scholarship, or research is not an infringement of copyright. The following factors are considered in determining fair use:

1. The purpose and character of the use, including whether the use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes.
2. The nature of the copyrighted work.
3. The amount and importance of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole.
4. The effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

If you have any questions about copyright law or the fair use doctrine, or you need guidance about a specific situation, contact the Vice Chancellor for Academic Success or the District Office of Legal Services. Additional information is available in Alamo Colleges policy E.1.7 - Instructional Resources: Copyrighted Materials at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/E.1.7%20Policy.pdf>.

DONOR AND ALUMNI RELATIONS

It is critical to the Alamo Colleges' continued success that relationships with alumni, donors, and other supporters remain professional and mutually beneficial. This includes using the funds and other assets they provide for the purposes for which they were intended in a timely and fiscally sound manner. Employees must coordinate fundraising activities with the college institutional advancement office or the District Office of Institutional Advancement. The Board of Trustees and the ACCD Foundation have sole authority to accept gifts on behalf of the Alamo Colleges, its colleges, and its programs. If guidance is needed concerning donors or giving opportunities, contact your college institutional advancement office or the District Institutional Advancement Office. For additional information see Alamo Colleges procedure C.1.3.1 - Appropriations and Revenue Sources: Grants, Funds, Donations from Private Sources at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/C.1.3.1%20Procedure.pdf>.

EMPLOYMENT

We must treat each employee, student, and other members of the community with respect, honesty and civility.

Each employee is expected to work diligently in the performance of his or her assigned duties and to do his or her part in fulfilling the Alamo Colleges vision and mission. As an employer, the Alamo Colleges will promote a positive work environment that encourages cooperation, collaboration and creativity. Employees must follow Alamo Colleges policies and state and federal regulations governing employment practices, including Alamo Colleges policies prohibiting sexual harassment and discrimination. Additional guidance can be found in Alamo Colleges Policy D.1.1 Compliance with Policies and Procedures at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/D.1.1%20Policy.pdf>, Policy D.4.5 and Procedure D.4.5.1 - Harassment - at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/D.4.5%20Policy.pdf> and <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/D.4.5.1%20Procedure.pdf>; and Policy D.2.1 and Procedure D.2.1.1 - Equal Employment Opportunity at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/D.2.1%20Policy.pdf> and <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/D.2.1.1%20Procedure.pdf>.

Employees may hold secondary jobs provided the employee continues to meet the performance standards of his or her job and complies with Alamo Colleges policy. For more detailed guidance see Policy D.2.4 - Nepotism, Conflicts of Interest - at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/D.2.4%20Policy.pdf>; Procedure D.2.4.2 - Conflicts of Interest - at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/D.2.4.2%20Procedure.pdf>; and Procedure D.2.4.3 - Outside Employment - at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/D.2.4.3%20Procedure.pdf>.

ENSURING PROPER STEWARDSHIP

We have a responsibility to make sure that Alamo Colleges resources are used for the purposes for which these resources have been received.

All Alamo Colleges revenue and expenditures must be recorded and accounted for within the Alamo Colleges financial system. All Alamo Colleges employees who manage financial resources or are involved in financial transactions must be familiar with the Alamo Colleges' accounting structure and the policies and procedures that govern these transactions.

Employees must record all financial transactions accurately and in a timely manner, leading to a clear identification of the true business nature of each transaction, and must make and approve payments on behalf of the Alamo Colleges only for the purpose described in the supporting documentation.

Only Finance and Fiscal Services officials authorized for bank account establishment may establish bank accounts in the name of, or for the benefit of the Alamo Colleges.

Further information is available in Alamo Colleges policy C.1.1 - Financial Ethics and Accountability at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/C.1.1%20Policy.pdf>

MANAGEMENT OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Each budget manager, along with his or her supervisor, is responsible for financial resource management in compliance with Alamo Colleges policies and procedures, good business practices, and funding restrictions.

The budget manager and supervisor must determine the appropriate balance between internal control and operating efficiency, subject to Alamo Colleges policies and procedures. Part of this determination involves the delegation of signature authority. While signature authority may in some cases be delegated, budgetary responsibility remains a function of the budget manager.

The budget manager and supervisor must make certain that adequate segregation of duties exists. For example, one employee entering payroll data into the payroll system, approving the data entered and receiving the payroll report, earning statements and/or payroll checks provides an opportunity for inappropriate transactions. Another example is a purchasing process where one employee orders goods, approves the order, and receives the goods.

Alamo Colleges employees with responsibility for financial management must:

- review monthly reports of account activity to determine that all transactions are accurate and complete, including supporting documentation that substantiates all transactions;
- verify that all entries made to each account are appropriate, comply with Alamo Colleges policy, and are allowed based on the restrictions (if any) of the funding source; and
- take corrective action to resolve errors and inappropriate transactions posted to the account.

Alamo Colleges employees and trustees shall not take any action to fraudulently influence, coerce, manipulate, or mislead an auditor engaged in the performance of an audit and shall cooperate fully in a timely manner with internal and external auditors.

PROTECTING ALAMO COLLEGES ASSETS

We must protect the property, equipment, and other assets of the Alamo Colleges, including but not limited to locking doors and cabinets and reporting patterns of unusual behavior. Misuse of assets takes many forms and can involve deception or misrepresentation of facts for personal gain, as well as taking property or funds for personal use. Examples include, but are not limited to, falsification of timekeeping records or expense reports; theft of cash or property; unauthorized or personal use of Alamo Colleges facilities, vehicles, equipment, supplies, or employee time; and conducting personal activities during work hours. Other examples include unauthorized use of any of the Alamo Colleges' names and logos and inappropriate use of Alamo Colleges procurement or discounts to the advantage of individuals or non-Alamo Colleges entities. Supervisors must provide the necessary supervision and control to include the use, inventory and disposal of Alamo Colleges property according to Alamo Colleges policy. For further information see Alamo Colleges procedure C.2.7.1 - Equipment/Property Management: Disposal of College District Property at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/C.2.7.3%20Procedure.pdf>.

PURCHASING AND VENDOR RELATIONS

Employees throughout the Alamo Colleges have been given authority and responsibility for selected aspects of purchasing and contracting processes. This approach requires that employees involved at all stages of the purchasing and contracting process take responsibility for understanding and implementing Alamo Colleges policies and procedures regarding purchasing, contracting and vendor relations.

Unauthorized transactions are the personal financial responsibility of the individual committing the funds.

Employees may not ask for or accept, from any current or prospective vendor, supplier, or contractor, any cash or negotiable instrument. If the employee is involved in decisions regarding vendor, supplier, or contractor selection or proposals, they also may not accept, from any current or prospective vendor, supplier, or contractor, any benefit of more than nominal value (less than \$50). Even items of nominal value must not be given in exchange for preferential treatment of the donor, and such gifts must not create either actual or perceived conflict of interest. Examples of items of nominal value might include non-cash, non-negotiable token gifts with a value of less than \$50 such as baseball caps, key rings, and coffee mugs. If you have a question about accepting an item from a current or prospective vendor, supplier, or contractor, contact the District Ethics and Compliance Office or the District Office of Legal Services.

Departments may not obtain credit cards or establish charge accounts in the name of the Alamo Colleges or any of its component parts.

Special rules apply for employee contact with potential vendors and contractors during the bidding/proposal and selection process. For guidance on this topic see Alamo Colleges policy C.1.5 - Purchasing and Acquisitions at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/C.1.5%20Policy.pdf> and also Alamo Colleges procedure C.2.3.4 - Construction Management at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/C.2.3.4%20Procedure.pdf>.

For assistance with purchasing goods and services, contact the Acquisitions and Administrative Services department.

TRAVEL REGULATIONS

The Alamo Colleges reimburses employees and Board members for necessary, appropriately approved travel-related expenses. Employees must obtain advance approval and verify that planned travel is eligible for reimbursement before making arrangements. Be sure to plan travel well in advance and use the most economical means of transportation and other goods and services related to travel as good stewards of the Alamo Colleges' resources. Further information on employee travel is found in the employee travel expense procedure: go to <http://www.alamo.edu/district/fiscalaf/fiscalaffairs.html> and click on "Travel Procedure" on the left side of the screen.

USING COMPUTER AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

The Alamo Colleges provides computer and technology resources to support the work of employees and students. Employees must follow Alamo Colleges policies and procedures for responsible use of these resources, which include but are not limited to items such as the Alamo Colleges network, local area networks, computers and workstations, terminals, mobile computer systems, internet, email and other communication services, and other technology resources.

Authorized persons may use these resources for purposes related to instruction, coursework, research, and administration directly related to the mission of the Alamo Colleges. These resources may not be used for personal, private commercial, or any other non-Alamo Colleges purpose, including but not limited to unauthorized use of software, intent to breach security, using listservs for non-Alamo Colleges purposes, sending chain letters, or the introduction of computer viruses. Access to or sending of pornographic or sexually explicit images or text unrelated to legitimate Alamo Colleges teaching, research, or administrative responsibility is prohibited.

We must protect assigned access codes, passwords, and other authentication data, and never reveal our password(s) to another person including any other member of the Alamo Colleges community.

For further guidance and information on this topic see Appropriate Use of Information Technology Resources policy C.1.9 at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/C.1.9%20Policy.pdf>, and Chancellor's Directive 07-01 at http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/Images/Chancellors_Directive_07-01.pdf.

APPENDICES

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING A VIOLATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Members of the Alamo Colleges community should report suspected violations of the Code of Conduct by doing the following:

1. Discuss the suspected violation with your immediate supervisor, except when the supervisor is involved. If the immediate supervisor is involved, talk to the next level supervisor. The supervisor (or next level supervisor) will advise you as to the appropriate action to take depending on the nature of the suspected violation. Other resources include Employee Services, the District Ethics and Compliance Office, and the District Office of Legal Services. When Alamo Colleges policy or procedure provides administrative channels for reporting or resolution, use these channels provided by our policies and procedures and the Alamo Colleges Employee Handbook available at <http://www.alamo.edu/accd/hr/handbook.htm>.

For concerns about conditions of work, compensation, and other employment-related matters, follow the instructions in Policy D.3.3 and Procedure D.3.3.1 - Employee Complaints - at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/D.3.3%20Policy.pdf> and <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/D.3.3.1%20Procedure.pdf>; and for complaints about harassment including sexual harassment, see Policy D.4.5 and Procedure D.4.5.1 - Harassment - at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/D.4.5%20Policy.pdf> and <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/D.4.5.1%20Procedure.pdf> or contact Employee Services for assistance.

2. You may use the Ethics Hotline system for cases in which regular channels do not exist, such as fraud, conflict of interest, or other misconduct, or if you wish to remain anonymous (you may provide contact information if you choose to do so). Anonymity and confidentiality will be protected within the limits of the law. The

APPENDIX A

hotline system consists of a toll-free telephone number - 866-294-3696 - and an internet reporting site - <http://www.ethicspoint.com>. More information regarding the hotline system is available on the Alamo Colleges Ethics website at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/> (see the "Hotline System" menu on the left side of the page). Although employment-related matters such as discrimination may be reported through the hotline system, it is not meant to be a substitute for employment-related grievances or appeals (see #1). For these matters, contact Employee Services for assistance and follow the grievance or appeal process provided by Alamo Colleges policies and procedures.

3. If the situation involves an immediate danger to people or property, call 911 and the Alamo Colleges Police Department (222-0911).

RETALIATION

The Alamo Colleges is committed to the proper resolution of reported matters, and to the protection of both the accused and the accuser in the reporting of suspected violations of law, regulations, professional standards, or Alamo Colleges policies or Code of Conduct. The identity of individuals who, in good faith, report suspected violations will be protected within the limits of the law. Employees who engage in retaliatory actions will be subject to disciplinary measures, up to and including termination of employment. Report suspected retaliatory actions to Employee Services.

For more information, see Policy D.3.2 - Protection from Retaliation - at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/D.3.2%20Policy.pdf>; Procedure D.3.2.1 - College District Protection from Retaliation - at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/D.3.2.1%20Procedure.pdf>; and Procedure D.3.2.2 - Statutory Whistleblower Protection - at <http://www.alamo.edu/district/ethics/searchfiles/D.3.2.2%20Procedure.pdf> and Chancellor's Directive 07-02 at http://www.alamo.edu/main/html/admin/chancellor/pdf/Chancellors_Directive_07-02.pdf.

APPENDIX B

RESPONSIBILITIES

The following table outlines the responsibilities of individuals within the Alamo Colleges to uphold the Code of Conduct.

Board of Trustees	To establish policies that govern ethical behavior on the part of all members of the Alamo Colleges community.
Chancellor	To provide the vision and leadership for the support of the Ethics and Compliance Program. To put in place a process that creates a culture and climate of personal responsibility and accountability.
District Ethics and Compliance Officer	To review reports of alleged violations and investigate, or refer them as appropriate for investigation, to determine whether a violation has occurred and whether actions are warranted.
District General Counsel	To provide advice and research on matters relating to laws applicable to the Alamo Colleges.
College Presidents	To ensure that all members of the college community are aware of the need for complete compliance with the Code of Conduct. To report suspected violations through appropriate administrative channels; to protect both the alleged violator and the individual reporting the suspected violation.
Department Chairs, Administrators, Directors, Managers and Supervisors	To encourage and support efforts by employees to perform duties and responsibilities at the highest standards. To ensure that supervisors are promoting excellence in ethical practices through periodic training and daily reinforcement. To report suspected violations through appropriate administrative channels; to protect both the alleged violator and the individual reporting the suspected violation.
Faculty, Staff and Students	To conduct all Alamo Colleges activities in accordance with the Code of Conduct. To report suspected violations through appropriate administrative channels; to protect both the alleged violator and the individual reporting the suspected violation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT

I have received a copy of the Alamo Colleges Ethics Handbook and I understand that each Alamo Colleges employee, agent, consultant, contract worker, trustee, and volunteer is responsible for understanding and following all applicable laws, regulations, professional standards and Alamo Colleges policies and Code of Conduct.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Title: _____

Campus/Department: _____

Date: _____ Last four digits of SSN: _____

When you receive this handbook, complete this form and return it to the Alamo Colleges District Ethics and Compliance Office, 201 W. Sheridan, San Antonio, Texas, 78204-1429.

