

# YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY STATEMENT OF ETHICS

## Preamble

We, the faculty and administrative members of the Youngstown State University (YSU) community, strive to create an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, learning, scholarship, university, and public service. The YSU Statement of Ethics is intended to guide all faculty and administrators as we work together to fulfill this mission. These core principles describe appropriate relations among members of the University community, the constituencies we serve, and the larger society in which we work.

This Statement serves as a guide of conduct through articulating the principles that underlie our behavior. This Statement assists individuals in resolving ethical dilemmas by describing some of the rights, responsibilities, freedoms, and constraints upon our actions. As a community, we recognize the difficulty in discerning the resolution of these dilemmas and their ensuing conflicts. For example, freedom of expression and academic freedom carry with them the responsibility to respect the worth and dignity of each human being. Likewise, the unfettered search for and dissemination of knowledge requires honesty both in its pursuit and communication. Moreover, professional autonomy, a hallmark of higher education, is preserved when it is exercised within the context of the principles this Statement supports.

Although interpretation of the Statement's principles is mediated by personal values, culture, and experiences, the University community affirms the fundamental values of integrity, competence, respect, and responsibility that this Statement articulates. Achieving a community which practices these ideals requires not only the expression of these ideals but also a personal commitment to a lifelong effort to act ethically.

## Integrity

We, the faculty and administrative members of the YSU community, uphold our commitment to cultivate integrity in all areas of University life. In so doing, we adhere to the principle of moral inclusion, i.e., rules of morality, honesty, and fair play are applied to all regardless of age, race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, or socioeconomic status.

Furthermore, as members of the University community, we become aware of our own moral perspectives as we engage in the process of values clarification. We do so in order to eliminate biases that would hinder the application of the principle of moral inclusion. Members of the University community foster integrity through educational efforts in campus media, seminars, lectures, and other programs.

There are three key areas in which integrity plays a major role. First, the performance of duties and job responsibilities requires integrity insofar as these encompass the resolution of conflicts of interests among students and employees of the University. Next, interactions within the YSU community require integrity insofar as these interactions encompass the proper use of power.

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Power is not to be used in an abusive manner. Thirdly, in the distribution of resources within our community, integrity is present insofar as distributions are equitable and fair.

Furthermore, a commitment to integrity requires that publication credit accurately reflect the relative and proportional professional contributions of the individuals involved. When major contributions of a professional character are made by several persons to a common project, these are recognized by joint authorship. In valuing integrity, we also recognize student authorship of written work, and that a student is usually listed as the principal author of any multiple-authored article that is substantially based on that student's dissertation or thesis.

### Competence

We, the faculty and administrative members of the YSU community, uphold our commitment to maintain competence and expertise in our chosen fields. In so doing, we engage in professional activities that will both increase and maintain our awareness of current information and our maintenance of performance standards.

Furthermore, we recognize our limitations and seek appropriate guidance and education to broaden them. In recognizing the need to further our competence, we actively pursue excellence in our areas of expertise and their related fields. Furthermore, we recognize that we are to maintain a level of education, training, and research. In doing so, we further our goals of effective teaching, supervision, and participation in the activities required of us in our individual academic environments.

Finally, we recognize that a commitment to competence requires an obligation to be accountable for our individual actions and judgments. We uphold professional standards of conduct. If our performance or conduct is impaired and our expected duties cannot be fulfilled, then reasonable steps must be taken to prevent harm to those we encounter.

### Respect

We, the faculty and administrative members of the YSU community, adhere to a universal, comprehensive respect for persons. Implicit in such respect is a valuing of what it is to be human so as to preserve and encourage the rights of all individuals. Although we possess certain rights, our rights do not exist in a vacuum; they are activated in a web of relationships such that there is reciprocity between rights and the conditions that make them possible. This reciprocity leaves us necessarily respectful of one another.

Through a respect for persons, we guarantee some basic rights and equal access to these rights as the respective benefits of the many facets of our environment. We all have a right to be heard.

Included in this right is the requirement to work toward an environment that not only allows people to be heard but also empowers them to the point of making themselves heard. This includes the duty of not silencing others through discriminatory or prejudicial behavior, as well as the duty of seeking to eradicate that behavior which drowns out the voices of the minority. We all have a right to be safe. Included in this right is the freedom from exploitative power

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relationships. Within any community there are power differentials, but when such distinctions are enacted with an underlying respect for persons and their role in the community, destructive effects are minimized. Finally, we all have a right to be valued. Included in this right is the requirement to value others, such that we respect their privacy and confidentiality.

Inevitable in a framework of rights are the ensuing conflicts that arise within any community when desires are incongruent. Yet, when such conflicts arise against the backdrop of a commitment to respect, these conflicts are resolved in such a manner as to allow for a positive and productive future after conflict. As members of the YSU community, we support this future—a future based on mutual respect.

## Responsibility

As educational leaders, faculty and administrative members of our University community must demonstrate responsibility to our students, colleagues, institutions, disciplines, and community.

Within the YSU community, we recognize the responsibility to value all students. In order to contribute to the ongoing development of students, we will value their opinions, time, and academic contributions. Within this framework of responsibility, classroom performance will be assessed in ways that are valid, open, fair, and consistent. As members of the YSU community, we recognize the responsibility of demonstrating that we value the dignity of our colleagues in such a way as to preserve their academic, professional, and personal reputation. Members of our community are to work cooperatively with colleagues to foster professional development.

Members of the University are to be aware of and value the educational goals, policies, and standards of the University. Members agree to work for the good of the University as a whole and will endeavor to abide by stated University policies and regulations that pertain to its well-being. Neither outside commitments nor personal gain will be allowed to come into conflict with this responsibility.

Members of the YSU community shall maintain a high regard for and a continued involvement in the discipline in which they are involved. This requires gaining and maintaining a high level of valid knowledge that ensures that professional expertise is accurate, current, representative, appropriate, and without personal bias. Furthermore, we will take steps to understand alternative ways of presenting knowledge and skills. Finally, we shall take steps to foster an environment that develops these practices.

As members of the University, we will represent YSU to the community for the mutual enrichment of both. We recognize that we have the responsibility to share knowledge and skills and to provide important leadership and enlightenment to the communities in which we live. This responsibility will manifest itself in terms of community and public service, often reflecting, but not limited to, our areas of expertise.

## Conclusion

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We, the faculty and administrative members of the YSU community, make this commitment to the values of integrity, competence, respect, and responsibility. In so doing, we recognize this is a fundamental, though not an exhaustive, list of ethical principles that can serve as a framework for our relationships to one another within the context of continuous moral development.

Approved by the Academic Senate on June 4, 1997

Accepted by the Board of Trustees on March 13, 1998