



CODE OF CONDUCT
for
postsecondary career colleges and universities
who are Members of the Association

Previously Adopted SEPTEMBER 2010 and Modified JUNE 19, 2012

www.career.org

Adopted March 9, 2020
Revised June 23, 2020

Preamble

The Career Education Colleges and Universities (below, “CECU” or “the Association”) is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt national trade association formed “to promote access, accountability and excellence in career and professional higher education,” according to its Bylaws. The Association has previously articulated the following Vision, Mission and Core Value statements:

Vision

We envision a future where the focus of U.S. higher education is to develop a globally competitive workforce and to enable all students to achieve their educational and career dreams.

Mission

The Association is the premier source of crucial information and public policy recommendations that promote access to private sector higher education and the importance of workforce development.

Our Core Values

Passionate commitment to our members and the students they serve; and dedication to integrity, accountability, transparency and excellence in career and professional higher education.

Code of Conduct

On March 9, 2020, the Board of Directors of CECU agreed unanimously on the need to go beyond the above general concepts by adopting this Code of Conduct (“Code”) to articulate to the public and, in particular, students and prospective students, the Association membership’s agreement and commitment to ethical practices in the delivery of educational services by private sector colleges and universities.

Resolution Encouraging Increased Diversity in Hiring and Contracting

On June 19, 2012, the Board of Directors of CECU adopted unanimously the following Resolution:

Whereas, the Career Education Colleges and Universities (CECU) is the leading national trade association representing private sector institutions of higher education in the United States, which are critical to meeting national workforce readiness and education goals through quality, professional and career-focused education programs,

Whereas, CECU believes it is appropriate to take positive steps to increase the representation of minorities in the areas of employment, education and business from which they have been historically excluded,

Whereas, proprietary colleges and universities provide a quality education to thousands of minority students providing workforce skills in the areas of healthcare, information technology, business and numerous other academic and professional studies,

Whereas, CECU member schools employ and contract with various businesses to provide goods and services to their students, administrators and faculty,

Whereas, CECU believes qualified minority and women owned businesses can provide quality goods and services to the growing private sector colleges and universities,

Whereas, minority and women owned businesses are defined as those that are at least 51% owned by an African-American, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, or Pacific Islander, and women owned businesses are defined as those that are at least 51% owned by women, further, minority and women owned businesses are the fastest-growing segment of new business in the U.S. they are the growth engine of the economy,

Therefore, be it resolved, that CECU encourages its member colleges and universities, when feasible, to employ or otherwise hire qualified minority and women owned businesses to pro-actively seek to diversify one's vendor contracts.

Be it further resolved, that this resolution become part of new member orientation and become part of CECU's Code of Conduct.

CECU Code of Conduct

Member institutions agree:

Integrity

1. To provide educational services according to standards of honesty and fairness and to render those services to students in a manner that, in the same circumstance, it would apply to or demand for itself.
2. To provide recruiting materials that are clear, accurate and unambiguous as to content and purpose.
3. To provide each prospective student with financial aid information concerning the total cost of their education and the repayment requirements of their student loans.
4. To provide prospective and current students with accurate information about educational programs, services and performance in a manner that:
 - a. provides clear information regarding institutional accreditation and programmatic accreditation if applicable;
 - b. provides information about the institution's refund policies ;
 - c. does not promise, guarantee, or mislead regarding transferability of credits to or from another institution; and
 - d. that does not promise or guarantee employment or income level after graduation.

Accountability & Transparency

5. To provide maximum possible transparency related to program outcomes in ways that enable prospective students to determine the best career programs for their goals. A common set of outcome metrics for all programs at all schools should be a goal of all schools in all sectors as a commitment to providing students with the best information upon which to make their choices.
6. To safeguard the public trust by providing educational and related services in a manner that meets or exceeds minimum requirements under applicable federal and state laws and regulations and accrediting agency standards.
7. To provide a method for school employees to inform senior management of potential violations of laws, regulations, accrediting agency standards and the institution's policies and procedures.
8. To provide a procedure for expeditious handling of student complaints and disputes.

Excellence

9. To provide a quality academic experience by:
 - a. maintaining strong, ethical leadership in management;
 - b. providing qualified faculty;
 - c. developing, structuring and offering outcomes-focused program curricula;
 - d. periodically reviewing faculty, curricula, facilities, equipment, programs and staff; and
 - e. providing appropriate resources to support the teaching and learning process.

10. To assist graduates interested in finding full-time employment in jobs related to their program of study, without guaranteeing employment.

Enforcement

11. The CECU board of directors shall remove an institution from the membership if:
 - a. the institution has had its license to operate terminated or denied upon renewal by the state in which it is located; or
 - b. the institution has had its accreditation terminated or denied upon renewal by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education; or

The CECU board of directors may remove by a two-thirds vote of the board an institution for cause as stated in both a formal complaint lodged against such institution and based upon the research and recommendations of the appropriate reviews of such a complaint. The primary basis for such complaints shall be "Conduct prejudicial to the interests of the association."

Procedure for Filing Complaints of Misconduct by a CECU Member

Approved by CECU's Board on June 23, 2020

Article 2, Section 6 of CECU's Bylaws provides clear direction for "Removal from Membership." The Bylaws state that a member may be removed from membership for the following reasons:

- (a.) Failure to Maintain Licensure and Accreditation
- (b.) Failure to Pay Dues and Assessment
- (c.) Failure to Comply with Policies.

Section C specifically addresses the issues of misconduct and/or reputational damage to the sector/association. Here is the exact language:

Members shall comply with Policies established in these Bylaws or by the Board of Directors. Violation of such Policies or conduct prejudicial to the interests of the Association may result in removal from membership. The Board of Directors may remove a Member from membership pursuant to this subsection only upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors.

Currently membership can be revoked for; 1.) Loss of license and 2.) Loss of Accreditation.

This proposal clarifies the process by which the Board will determine if a member should be removed for conduct prejudicial to the interests of the Association. The determination is a judgement call by the Board. Therefore due process of such a consideration must be used by the Board in making such a determination.

1. Basis for Such Complaints:
Education Members, Allied Members, and all other forms of membership reflect upon the reputation, image, and credibility of the sector-at-large, and the Association (CECU).
2. Complaints against an Education Member limited to its Leadership:
Complaints against an Education Member can only be filed against the actual Education Member. However, alleged misconduct by one or more officers of the Education Member may be the basis for such a complaint.

Complaints against an Allied Member can only be filed against the Allied Member. However, alleged misconduct by one or more officers of the Allied Member may be the basis for such a complaint.

3. Basis for Complaints:
Complaints against an Education Member or Allied Member for *Violation of such Policies or conduct prejudicial to the interests of the Association* may be based upon any of the following standards:
 - A. Respect for and upholding all public laws and regulations that govern a school's operations.
 - B. Honesty in conducting the business of a school or organization including transparency and good faith in managing all contracts.

- C. Respecting the confidentiality of all information within the school's or Allied Member's operations; especially as it relates to students and/or school personnel.
 - D. Operating in a manner that reflects negatively on the sector, and indirectly the association. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, actions by their state licensing agency; their Accreditor; and/or the U.S. Department of Education in addressing issues of honesty, fairness, and respect for others.
 - E. All such complaints must be in reference to their current employment, not that of a previous employer/ CECU Member.
4. Filing of such Complaints; and Appropriate Action by CECU:
Any current member of CECU may file a complaint against other current members by submitting a written complaint to the President & CEO; or the Chair of the Board of Directors. Such complaint shall provide a detailed articulation of the specific concerns related to *conduct prejudicial to the interests of the Association*. Any supporting materials the complainer believes are appropriate for consideration of such complaint are accepted as part of such submission.

Such complaints shall remain confidential until such time as a final action has been taken by the Board of Directors. If no action is taken against an individual, such complaints shall remain confidential.

Upon receipt of such complaint, the Chair of the Board of Directors shall appoint a Taskforce of not less than three nor more than five members to determine if such a complaint has merit. This Taskforce may be made up of education members, allied members, or other CECU memberships. In naming the Taskforce the Board Chair shall seek to identify such individuals with knowledge and expertise related to issues such as those named in the complaint. Professional staff of the association may provide administrative support to the work of this Taskforce; however, such professional staff shall not have a vote in making a determination of the basis of such complaints.

When or if a Taskforce is appointed, the member who is the subject of such allegation shall be officially notified (by written electronic or surface mail communications) of such charges. In such a communication, CECU shall invite a written response to such charges in defense of their conduct. It is appropriate for the communication to give a specific time limit for such a written response; not less than seven days nor greater than 30 days.

In the written notice to the member who is subject to an allegation, CECU shall inform the member that during this investigation period the member will be deemed "On Probation." Because the process is considered confidential unless formal action is taken against such member, probation will not be announced publicly. During the review of the complaint, such Taskforce shall provide full due process to both the individual who filed such a complaint and to the member who is the subject of such complaint. Such due process shall provide adequate opportunity for both parties to respond to questions from the taskforce; and other such steps as the taskforce deems appropriate for a full and fair consideration of such complaint.

Such Taskforce shall, within 60 days of the filing such a complaint provide a recommendation to the Board Chair regarding the continued membership of such school/allied member. Upon receipt of such recommendation, the Board Chair bring such recommendation to the full Board of Directors for their action. This may be done by a separate meeting (including a conference call) of the full Board; or as part of the next scheduled Board meeting. The issue shall be considered in Executive Session. If the Board votes to remove the member, such action shall be publicly recorded in the Minutes of that meeting.

If the Taskforce concludes there is no basis for further consideration of the complaint, the Taskforce shall provide both the Board Chair and the individual filing such a complaint a written explanation of their decision. No further action shall occur.

5. Final Determination by the Board of Directors:

The Bylaws make clear that a member may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors. Such vote shall be a recorded vote.

If the Board decides there is not a basis for action against a member, such a decision shall be shared in writing with the person filing such complaint. No other action of the Board shall be made public.

If the Board votes by a 2/3 majority to remove a member, notice of such action shall first be presented by the Board Chair to that member and to the person having filed such complaint in writing. After appropriate notice to the member, such action shall be made public by posting on CECU's website for not less than 15 nor more than 30 days.

6. Re-admission of a Member removed for Cause:

An Education Member, Allied Member or other CECU member removed for cause related to *conduct prejudicial to the interests of the Association* may rejoin CECU in good standing upon notice that the individual determined guilty of such misconduct is no longer with such organization. If a member has been charged with multiple violations, all such violations shall be remedied to the satisfaction of CECU's Board of Directors before such member is returned to full membership. CECU's Board of Directors shall consider such reports of compliance, provided by either the Board Chair or the President/CEO.

The long-term goal of this process is a pledge to uphold the association's commitment to excellence in education. In advancing this process, the association's goal is to help such members restore their reputation and standing within and on behalf of the sector at large.