Code of Ethics

As a member of the Board, I will strive to improve community college education, and to that end I shall adhere to all state and federal laws, College District policies, and the following code of ethical standards:

1. Attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings insofar as possible and become informed concerning issues to be considered at those meetings.

2. Bring about desired changes through legal and ethical procedures, upholding and enforcing all applicable statutes, regulations, and court decisions pertaining to community colleges.

3. Work with other Board members to establish effective Board policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the College District to the District President, and act on behalf of the Board only with the official authorization of a majority of the members of the Board.

4. Work with other Board members to establish and adhere to policies and practices prohibiting unlawful discrimination, including harassment on any basis prohibited by law.

5. Make policy decisions only after consideration of agenda items presented at publicly held Board meetings.

6. Render all decisions based on the available facts and my own independent judgment, while avoiding undue influence from individuals outside of the College District community.

7. Encourage the free expression of opinion by Board members and seek transparency in communications between Board members and students, staff, and community members.

8. Communicate to other Board members and the District President expressions of public reaction to Board policies and College District programs.

9. Stay informed about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing information necessary in the performance of my Board member role, such as those sponsored by the Texas Association of Community Colleges, the American Association of Community Colleges, Association of Governing Boards, and the Association of Community College Trustees. I will not seek and will not accept appointments or leadership positions with such organizations in a representative capacity as a Board member of the College District without the express written authority of the Board.
10. Support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as College District staff, insist on a regular and impartial evaluation of all staff, and respect the role and responsibilities of College District employees and contractors to empower them to work without my interference.

11. Act with integrity, avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest, and refrain from using my Board position for actual or apparent personal or partisan gain.

12. Take no private action that will compromise the Board or administration and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law, including all deliberations of the Board in closed/executive session.

13. Regularly conduct a Board of Trustees’ self-assessment to give individual Board members an opportunity to assess how effectively they fulfill their responsibilities as a Trustee and how effectively the full Board fulfills its duties.

14. Remember always that my first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the College District.

15. Refrain from any attempt to influence any operational decision of the College District, including but not limited to individual admissions, personnel, management, or purchasing decisions except when such is an issue is being presented for consideration at a legally posted Board meeting; and do not engage in any communications about a specific grievance with any person with a pending grievance before the College District.

Referenced in part from the National School Boards Association and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

Leadership Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees sets a constructive tone for the entire College District. The Board strives to create a positive, future-oriented climate of integrity, innovation, and excellence and works to build effective relationships with all stakeholders. The Board understands and adheres to its governance roles and responsibilities under Board policies and applicable laws.

Trustees treat one another with respect and work as a team to accomplish the Board’s work. Trustees prepare for Board meetings, avoid real or apparent conflicts of interest, adhere to ethical conduct, and vote on behalf of the entire community. The Board accommodates differing opinions when debating issues and bases decisions on information relevant to agenda items presented at
Each Board meeting. The Board considers the political ramifications of its actions and stands up for what it believes is right for students, employees, and the community. A member of the Board of Trustees is responsible to the entire College District rather than to any individual part or constituency within the College District or community. Trustees do not request or demand action that violates any law, Board policy, or College District procedure.

Policy-Making and Advocacy Responsibilities

The Board adopts policies to direct and guide the College District. Board policies define and uphold a vision and mission reflecting student and community expectations. Trustees act strategically, focus on priority items and on the community’s future learning needs. Trustees engage in creative, thoughtful discussions as they plan for the future and envision what is best for the College and community. Policies set standards for quality, ethics, and prudence in College operations.

The Board balances and integrates the community’s interests and needs into policies benefitting the common good and the College District’s continuing operations. Trustees are aware of the community they serve by learning issues affecting the community and its demographic, economic, and social trends. Because the Board protects the public interest and represents the community’s voice, Trustees understand what benefits the College District confers on the community, learn about community and regional needs and expectations, purposefully involve community discussion on issues that impact the community, and maintain good relationships with other community leaders.

Trustees advocate for and protect the College. They promote the College in the community and seek support for the College District from local, state, and national policymakers. They protect the College District’s ability to fulfill its mission and promise to its communities. Trustees: (1) know the college’s history, mission, and Core Values; (2) recognize the college’s accomplishments; (3) actively support the college’s mission and strategic plans; (4) positively represent the college in the community; (5) serve as leaders in the community; (6) participate in community activities as college representatives, where permissible; (7) adhere to ethical and SACSCOC accreditation standards; (8) educate the community about the college’s needs and issues; (9) are informed of relevant state laws and regulations; (10) understand state and national educational policy issues; (11) advocate for college interests to state and national personnel and legislators; (12) actively seek political and civic support for the college; (13) work to secure adequate public
funding for the college; (14) actively support the college’s foundation and fundraising efforts; and (15) understand and protect the faculty’s academic freedom.