

INTEGRITY

Illinois Central College demonstrates integrity in all its practices and relationships

Illinois Central College has, from its beginnings, made a high priority of conducting itself with integrity. The formulation of its Core Values, combined with a heightened public awareness and expectations of institutions of higher education, led to an even higher awareness of the importance of engaging in practices that promote institutional integrity. This chapter documents how Illinois Central College demonstrates integrity in its internal publications, conflict resolution practices, sensitivity to diversity, and relationships with other institutions of higher learning, student organizations, students, and businesses.

Handbooks

FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME FACULTY

Full-time and part-time faculty handbooks contain information about the general procedures of the operation of Illinois Central College. The handbooks are revised and distributed to all full- and part-time faculty members each year.

The Self-Study survey indicated that 66% of all faculty members understand College procedures as stated in the handbook. However, no faculty survey question asked if practices and procedures are consistent with stated policies. Two-thirds of all faculty members know and understand Illinois Central College's policy on racial/sexual discrimination and harassment. Of all faculty members, 78% indicated that they would report such discrimination/harassment if encountered although a thorough discussion of it was not contained in either the part-time or full-time faculty handbook.

Faculty members who were surveyed stated that they were "somewhat familiar" with the Mission/Philosophy and Core Values as contained in the handbooks, discussed in orientation sessions, or as stated in the questionnaire itself.

Over 80% of faculty members clearly understand the professional ethics guidelines as stated in handbook information.

STUDENT HANDBOOKS

Various handbooks at the College are available to all students. The general *Student Handbook* states policies, regulations, and procedures that apply to all students. It also includes services, programs, activities, and organizations that are available to students. The *Student Activities Handbook* "is intended to serve as a guide to general policies and procedures that impact the student organization/club."

The Health Careers and Public Service Department issues individual student handbooks that are specific to the programs in that department, including ones for Dental Hygiene, Medical Laboratory Technician, Medical Office Assistant, Associate Degree Nursing, Occupational Therapy Assistant Certificate, Phlebotomy, Physical Therapist Assistant, Practical Nursing, Radiography, Respiratory Therapist, and Surgical Technologist.

A study of these handbooks revealed that they reflect the general *Student Handbook* as related to topics such as academic honesty, harassment, and ethics. In addition, many of the health career handbooks expand upon these topics by including or referring to more specific guidelines such as the American Nurse's Association Code of Ethics.

According to the Self-Study survey, academic honesty, academic freedom, and harassment policies are clearly stated and adequately addressed, and Illinois Central College practices were deemed consistent with handbook policies. On each of these issues, over 90% of the 373 students surveyed either “strongly agreed” or “agreed.”

Because academic freedom issues are found under “Educational Rights and Responsibilities,” they are somewhat hidden and difficult to find. In addition, academic freedom is more difficult to find since there is no listing in the catalog index.

Administration and Staff Handbooks (Manuals)

The *Administrative, Professional and Support Staff Manual*, revised in June 1998, and the *Classified Staff Manual*, revised in January 1997, provide all full-time, nonfaculty employees with information concerning policies and procedures of the College. No manual or handbook exists for part-time staff. Policies and procedures are disseminated by word of mouth, thereby allowing transference of inaccurate information. The only printed material given to part-time staff is a copy of the *Student Handbook*.

Ninety-five percent of all staff surveyed indicate Illinois Central College policies and procedures are clearly stated in the staff manuals, and 90% say practices are consistent with the stated policies. Forty-seven percent of all staff could not judge if professional ethics/conduct guidelines are adequately and clearly addressed in the staff manuals. Fifty-eight percent of staff could not judge if academic freedom policies are adequately and clearly addressed.

Harassment policies are adequately and clearly addressed, according to 67% of staff members surveyed. Seventy-five percent of all staff are familiar with the Mission/Philosophy and Core Values as contained in the manuals, the catalog, or as stated in the Self-Study questionnaire itself.

Illinois Central College Catalog

The Illinois Central College catalog functions as a contract between the College and its students. Students’ academic requirements are detailed in the catalog. In addition, academic conduct, academic standards, students’ rights and responsibilities, and academic freedom are covered in the catalog.

Comprehensive and current information about the College appears in the catalog, the contents of which are reviewed and updated as needed. The most recent catalog printed in 2001 is also available on the web site. In addition to details about courses, courses of study, and degrees offered, the catalog includes such information as application procedures, admission, registration, graduation requirements, grading policies and procedures, and the College Mission and Philosophy.

The catalog offers adequate and accurate information essential to students. About 90% of the student surveys “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the policies in the catalog are clearly stated, and academic honesty and academic freedom policies are adequately addressed. In addition, the survey showed that the general education requirements are outlined well, the catalog accurately describes the individual programs and courses, and the catalog is easy to read and understand.

In the catalog as in the *Student Handbook*, academic freedom issues are found under “Educational Rights and Responsibilities.” No academic freedom listing exists in the catalog index. The catalog more than adequately meets the integrity goals of the College.

Policies and Practices for Resolving Internal Disputes

FACULTY/ADMINISTRATION DISPUTES

Faculty/Administration disputes at Illinois Central College are resolved under the terms of the agreement negotiated by the Illinois Central College Faculty Forum and administration. This agreement addresses issues such as teaching load, office hours, evaluation procedures, promotions, granting of tenure, and other issues pertaining to faculty members. The agreement specifies a formal grievance procedure, detailing the stages and timetable for submitting a grievance over the contract, including resolution through outside arbitration.

A less formal avenue for conflict resolution lies in either direct conversation between faculty members and administrators or through the regularly scheduled meetings between the Faculty Senate president and either the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs or the College President.

To date, faculty and administration have been successful in settling conflicts without the use of outside agents. However, occasional problems result from the lack of external/objective analysis of disputes until the formal arbitration stage. A method of involving a neutral third party at a point before formal arbitration might expedite the resolution of grievances.

FACULTY/FACULTY DISPUTES

No clearly defined procedure at Illinois Central College for resolving disputes between faculty members exists. As the administrator most closely connected to faculty members, the department chair generally intervenes if he or she feels a conflict would be detrimental to the Mission of the College. This intervention might take the form of an informal meeting between affected parties or a more formal mention of the problem in a faculty member's evaluation if such a conflict touched on those issues allowed in an evaluation.

In general, disputes between faculty members at Illinois Central College are so rare that the current system has worked in resolving them. However, since there is no clearly defined procedure for resolving disputes between faculty members that applies throughout the academic departments, consideration ought to be given to a more structured system of conflict resolution.

FACULTY/STUDENT DISPUTES

According to the student survey, 86.6% of students have never been involved in a dispute with faculty members. Disputes between faculty members and students are resolved through two avenues. When the dispute involves a question of academic performance, it is generally handled either by the faculty member directly or by the appropriate department chair. There is currently no defined procedure for how department chairs deal with student complaints against faculty members. Some inform faculty of any complaint; some do not. Some insist that students first discuss the issue with the faculty member while others do not require it. A detailed formal grievance procedure for alleged unfair or discriminatory treatment is in the student handbook, but it is not clear if this procedure would address questions of fairness in assigning grades.

When disputes between faculty members and students involve issues other than academic matters, they are generally addressed to the office of the Dean of Student Services. These complaints might involve, for example, concerns over sexual harassment. The dean generally meets with the student to gather information and then discusses the particulars with the faculty member. At other times, the dean may arrange a meeting between the faculty member and the student in an attempt to settle the issue.

The majority of disputes between faculty members and students are settled amicably and informally by direct conversation between the involved parties or through the intervention of the department chair.

Additionally, the *Illinois Central College Student Handbook* specifies the steps that students take if they feel they have been treated unfairly. The formal grievance involves all levels from the individual faculty member to a final resolution that might involve the College president. While the steps for bringing a grievance are clear, the steps taken to resolve it are not. For example, any resolution that might include altering a student's grade involves issues of academic integrity and freedom. If a grievance involves questions touching on academic integrity and freedom, the final resolution should remain in the hands of those directly involved in the academic programs of the College.

Since the last North Central visit, the College has taken steps to improve the manner in which disputes are resolved. The creation of the position of Dean of Student Services has aided in the handling of nonacademic disputes between students and faculty members. For example, concerns over potentially disruptive or dangerous student behavior are now dealt with in a more consistent manner.

However, the resolution of academically based complaints should be addressed. When a complaint by either a faculty member or student appears substantive, there is no articulated and consistent procedure for resolution from department to department. A more consistent procedure to resolve these disputes at the department level ought to be developed. Additionally, while there is a defined and publicized policy regarding sexual harassment, there are no defined policies that address racial or ethnic harassment or harassment based on sexual orientation listed in the *Student Handbook*.

STUDENT/STUDENT DISPUTES

Student-to-student disputes are resolved through the Dean of Student Services. A general code of student conduct is clearly spelled out in the student handbook. Working with the Public Safety Office, the dean resolves these conflicts using measures ranging from casual conversation, to warnings, to expulsion and criminal charges.

While Illinois Central College has a defined policy for sexual harassment, there is no defined policy for racial/ethnic harassment or for harassment based on sexual orientation. Since the Dean of Student Services currently serves as the sole adjudicator in resolving student disputes, the weight of decisions falls solely on him. The Dean of Student Services believes the College should consider establishing a judiciary panel composed of students and faculty members to deal with disputes that cannot be resolved through more informal means.

According to the Dean of Student Services, while the number of violent disputes between students has remained constant, the intensity of the violence has increased. Currently, Public Safety has no officers with municipal arrest authority, and none of the officers are armed. In cases of violence, Public Safety officers are reluctant to intervene because they have no means of defending themselves. Moreover, Public Safety officers must contact the appropriate law enforcement agency for assistance. Consideration should be given to increasing the training and authority of several Public Safety officers per shift so that they are armed and have arrest authority.

Institutional Publications, Statements, Transcripts, and Advertising

Illinois Central College publishes a wide array of documents for internal notification in the form of brochures, bulletins, memos, and handbooks and external distribution in the form of public statements, advertising, and news releases. Because of the overwhelming number of publications, this review was limited to a random sampling of materials, including faculty handbooks, the student handbook, the course schedule, the College web site, and a selection of marketing brochures and advertisements.

The policies and procedures were clear, well outlined, concise, and direct in all of the handbooks. There is little doubt as to expected behavior, repercussions for failing to meet the guidelines for expected behavior,

and the means to address grievances in most situations. Similar information is available in various sections of the web page. The hyperlinks on the College's web are easy to follow and lead to appropriate, comprehensible materials laid out in a logical, visually appealing format. The materials available are very useful to prospective students, current students, faculty members, and staff. The available materials run the gamut from faculty web pages to useful research resources on the World Wide Web from the library page.

Faculty members and staff ranked the College's internal publications very highly. On the Self-Study surveys, memos and faculty-staff news were rated highly for the content and usefulness. The most often used published materials were the monthly bulletin, rated 3.85/5.00 by full-time faculty members and 3.89/5.00 by part-time faculty members. Department memos were rated 3.70/5.00 by full-time faculty members and 3.76/5.00 by part-time faculty members with emails rated as 4.45/5.00 by full-time faculty members.

All of these publications exemplify to some extent the College's Core Values, Philosophy, and Mission. These documents were also reviewed in light of the purpose and goals of a community college in general and proved to be a strong foundation for the policies, procedures, and practices of the College. Each document is clear in its presentation of the ideals of Illinois Central College and the ideological goals to which the school and its constituency should strive.

College transcripts are handled with confidentiality and professionalism. Transcripts are issued by the Admissions Office. Each year over 15,000 transcripts are issued electronically, by mail, or in person. Students may choose to request a "while-you-wait" or next day transcript. Privacy and integrity is paramount to issuance of a student's transcript.

Partnerships and Collaborative Efforts

Through state guidelines and Illinois Central College policies, the College Board of Trustees and the Illinois Community College Board provide the oversight to ensure the College acts with integrity in its contractual agreements with members of business and industry, governmental agencies, and not-for-profit companies/agencies.

While Illinois Central College has no formal, specific policies written for the purpose of monitoring all contractual agreements, a system is in practice. Very little can occur without review or approval from the Board, the Illinois Community College Board, or other governing bodies that may have responsibility for the monitoring of grants, negotiated employee bargaining contracts, or fiscal areas. Numerous agreements between Illinois Central College and other institutions of higher education exist, many of which treat cooperative agreements which allow students from other community college districts to attend the College at in-district tuition and vice versa. These agreements are intended to increase statewide fiscal responsibility so students can afford to attend specialized programs that are not offered at all colleges.

The College is a member of the Central Illinois Higher Education Consortium. There seems to be good intercollege relationships based upon the cooperative agreements that were reviewed. Many of these agreements have been in place for a number of years and continue to be expanded and renewed on a yearly basis. In addition, many fliers and notices from other higher education institutions invite Illinois Central College students, faculty members, and staff to participate in a particular institution's activities.

Illinois Central College's partnerships with secondary institutions also validate its integrity. Its strong relationships with secondary schools during the last ten years have resulted in collaborative Tech Prep/School to Work activities as well as a variety of articulation agreements. These agreements provide students with postsecondary credits granted for achievements accomplished during high school years and often within secondary schools.

Illinois Central College also has articulation agreements through the Illinois Articulation Initiative, which is fully discussed in the Instructional Programs chapter.

Business, Industry and Government Contracts

Illinois Central College has validated its integrity in its many established partnerships with business and industry, particularly in the delivery of training and technical assistance. A prime example is the Caterpillar Dealer Service Technology program established through an agreement with Caterpillar Inc. to prepare service technicians for Caterpillar dealerships throughout the world.

Grants at the institution are handled through the Institutional Research Office and the Vice President for Administration and Finance. The development of the grant contract is based upon specific criteria. A College employee is designated as the grant person to ensure that all regulations are followed. The President and Vice Presidents ultimately determine grant applications to ensure they coincide with the Mission.

The College maintains its integrity in purchasing through appropriate policies and procedures. Above a \$10,000 limit, a bid process always follows a written procedure. Below that amount, forms are completed with approval signatures obtained. Review of Board minutes for the last ten years shows that the bid process has been followed.

Policies and Practices of Ethical Behavior and Responsibilities In Relationships with Students

ACTIVITIES

A wide variety of affordable and accessible activities are available to students, including participation in sports, music ensembles, theatrical productions, student clubs and organizations, fieldtrips, and attendance at guest performances and speeches. Many of these activities are sponsored by the Student Government Association (SGA), which is funded entirely by the College through the Student Activities departmental budget. Some of the activities which the SGA has sponsored during the current academic year include new student orientation, the Student Activities Fair, student government elections, Lobby Day, Lively Arts Series of four to six major performances, speech tournaments, leadership conferences, alcohol and drug-abuse awareness, Wellness programs, the Arts Fest, and the Student Recognition Banquet.

Numerous student clubs and organizations are available to interested students. The College funds the Student Government Association and partially funds Phi Theta Kappa, but all of the remaining organizations are self-supporting although the Student Activities Office can, on occasion, provide funds for one-time-only special events. Self-supporting organizations raise their own funds to support activities and projects through activities that adhere to strict guidelines supervised and enforced by the Student Activities Office. Over thirty-five student clubs are listed in the appendix.

Students are provided the opportunity to participate in such musical ensembles as the Jazz Band, the Concert Band, the Prairie Wind Ensemble, the Vocal Jazz Ensemble, the Chamber Singers, the Acappella Choir, and the Philharmonic Chorale. The *Harbinger*, the student newspaper, is published 12 times per year and is subject to no editorial restrictions by the administration. The Forensics team participates in formal debate competitions on a state and national level.

ATHLETICS

The College is a member of the National Junior College Athletic Association and the Collegiate Conference of Central Illinois. Participation in intercollegiate and intramural athletics is open to all students with ability and interest. Intercollegiate teams are segregated by gender, but all intramural activities are co-ed. There are seven intercollegiate teams and six areas for intramural teams to form.

Integrity in athletics is evidenced by the requirement that students participating in Intercollegiate Sports Teams must maintain a GPA of 2.0. Student athletes whose GPA falls below 2.5 are required to participate in the Student Athlete Monitoring Program. This program has been successful and has resulted in academic honors and awards for several of the intercollegiate athletic teams.

One component of the Student Athlete Monitoring Program involves the completion of a Progress Report by each of the student athlete's instructors. These reports enable coaches to keep track of a student's grades and to intervene immediately through enforced study hours when a student is at risk of failing a course. As noted in the "Athlete Monitoring Program Spring 2000 Evaluation Report," the faculty response to these progress reports is only 60%, which is not as high as expected in an institution which prides itself on academic achievement. Possibly faculty members, through inservices or other means, could be encouraged to respond to the student athlete Progress Reports in a timely manner.

Financial Integrity

The tuition fee per credit at Illinois Central College is established by the Board of Trustees and is subject to revision at any time. The history of tuition increases over the past ten years is reflected in Table 15-A.

Integrity is shown in that tuition increases have been moderate. Residents of the district who are 65 years of age or older at the time of registration are entitled to a tuition waiver for credit classes. However, these students must pay required fees and purchase textbooks.

Summary

When surveyed, all employee groups indicated by a significant majority that they believe Illinois Central College practices integrity as one of its Core Values either "usually" or "always", and a review of the above material indicates that the perception is generally borne out in fact. For example, the College's creation of the position of Dean of Student Services since the last North Central evaluation and the development of clear publications and explicit policies addressing issues such as sexual harassment, reflect its commitment to integrity in dealing with students. A recommendation is that clear and consistent interpretation and application of the College's policies and practices continue.

Although the above areas of the College were assessed regarding the integrity of its practices, there are other areas where questions involving integrity might be raised. For example, equitable distribution of teaching load, prerequisites or minimum competencies for students enrolling in classes, and the common practice of scheduling and then canceling classes are all examples of areas that may involve concerns of integrity. It might benefit the College to form a team to review further its policies and practices and assess whether they meet the College's standard for integrity.

TABLE 15-A

Tuition History			
Year	Tuition	Fees*	% Change
1991	32.00	2.45	
1992	36.00	2.45	12.5%
1993	36.00	2.45	
1994	40.00	2.45	11.1%
1995	40.00	2.45	
1996	42.00	2.45	5%
1997	42.00	2.45	
1998	42.00	2.45	
1999	42.00	2.45	
2000	45.00	2.45	7.1%
2001	45.00	2.45	
2002	50.00	0	11.1%

* Fees are not assessed to all students for all courses. The fee column reflects an average.

Strengths

- The student handbooks demonstrate integrity and are available to all students.
- Staff members feel that practices are consistent with the College's clearly stated policies and procedures.
- The catalog is an excellent, ethical resource to help students better understand the policies and procedures of the College.
- Since the last NCA visit, steps have been taken to improve the manner in which disputes between faculty members and students are handled.

Opportunities for Improvement

- The full-time faculty handbook does not discuss "Academic Freedom" as thoroughly as the part-time faculty handbook.
- The staff manuals have not been recently updated.
- No articulated and consistent College-wide procedure for resolution of academically based complaints between faculty members and students exists.
- The Core Values are not printed on most of the publications such as the student handbook, advertisements for the College, the homepage on the web, and approximately one-third of all department brochures.
- Many staff and faculty members do not know where to locate College policies on racial and sexual discrimination.
- Public Safety officers have no means of defense.

Recommendations

- Print the Core Values of the College on all College publications from advertisements and brochures to the web page and student handbook. An iconographic logo of the Core Values should be adopted as a school "letterhead" for all print materials.
- Develop a better policy for disseminating College policies with a copy of all official policy paperwork available at both libraries. Periodic "refresher" explanations of all policies and procedures should be offered to all employees to ensure they are aware of where to find the information needed.
- Create a part-time staff handbook.
- Continue the relationships that ICC has established with other institutions of higher education.
- Keep an updated, central list of the membership criteria of all organizations under Student Activities auspices.
- Describe "discrimination" more thoroughly and include a heading in the table of contents in both faculty handbooks. The full-time faculty handbook should also include a discussion of "Academic Freedom."
- Address "academic freedom" with more detail in the *Student Handbook* and the *College Catalog*. Make "Academic Freedom" a heading in both the "Educational Rights and Responsibilities" and the index in both publications.
- Revise staff manuals to include information concerning and entitled "Academic Freedom," "Professional Ethics/Conduct," and "Sexual and Racial Harassment/Discrimination."
- Consider a more structured system of conflict resolution when a dispute between faculty members arises.
- Develop policies that address racial or ethnic harassment or harassment based on sexual orientation.
- Consider establishing a judiciary panel composed of students and faculty members to handle disputes between faculty members and students that cannot be resolved through informal means.
- Consider increasing the training and authority of several Public Safety officers so they have more defined arrest authority.

