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**Kern Community College District  
Board Policy  
Chapter 3 – General Institution**

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**BP 3050 Institutional Code of Ethics**

**Reference:**

*WASC/ACCJC Accreditation Standard III.A.13*

The Kern Community College District recognizes that a commitment to the highest ethical and professional standards on the part of all persons associated with the District is necessary to fulfilling our mission and realizing our vision, which are policies of the District. This code of ethics is based on two fundamental principles.

The first is recognition of the dignity of all persons, which respects the inherent value and worth of each person. The second principle is a commitment to fulfilling our obligations to others using fair and honest means.

All associates in the District, faculty, students, management, classified staff, and trustees, as well as volunteers and vendors, each bear personal responsibility for their own ethical behavior and for the ethical stature of our organization. We are committed to fulfilling the District's mission. While we recognize the relationship between law and ethics, we further understand that legal requirements are necessary but not sufficient, and we endeavor always to do what is right and just, even when no one is watching, compelling, or evaluating our actions.

**Respect for Persons and Academic Freedom** [\(see BP 4030 titled Academic Freedom\)](#)

The inherent dignity of all persons requires that we conduct ourselves with civility in all circumstances of our professional lives. This means that we do not participate in or accept, condone, or tolerate physical or verbal forms of aggression, threat, harassment, ridicule, or intimidation. The District is an institution of higher education and especially values a spirit of free inquiry and free speech. The District encourages the expression of a range of points of view, but we expect all expressions of content to be conducted in a manner respectful of persons. The District nurtures an atmosphere of mutual respect by treating everyone with dignity, even when the values, beliefs, or behavior of a person or group is different from our own. The District recognizes this foundation of mutual respect to be the basis of civil discourse in an academic environment.

The District further protects the dignity of persons by maintaining the boundaries of both necessary and appropriate confidentiality, and by prohibiting the exploitation of all persons through sexual harassment or financial, professional, or

any other form of exploitation. The District seeks to develop policies, procedures, and practices which are both compassionate and fair. In order to assure that we are fair in our policies, procedures, and practices regarding the dignity and worth of persons, the District specifically prohibits discrimination as codified in BP/AP 3410 titled Nondiscrimination. While this prohibition is necessary, it is the genuine valuing of diversity that serves to create the general atmosphere in which persons can thrive and realize their potential.

### **Fairness and Honesty**

The District desires to participate in a healthy work environment which emphasizes the achievement of our common purpose and the development of our potential as individuals and as an organization.

The District will actively work to build the trust necessary to conduct its mission through open, honest, and fair practices and communication at all levels.

The District values and practices the sharing of information, transparency of policy, and consistency of practice in all its dealings.

The District neither tolerates nor condones dishonest practices, such as lying, stealing, plagiarizing, cheating, or deliberate misrepresentation of self, program, or information.

The District does not tolerate the misappropriation of resources of any kind, either through misuse of property, time, equipment, or systems, or through inaccurate reporting which results in personal or group gain.

The District develops and uses systems for the prohibition of bias, and for the reporting of conflict of interest, including conflicts resulting from work relationships in which employees have more than one role in relation to another person, resulting in social pressures on professional conduct.

In those circumstances where such conflicts cannot be avoided and/or are considered minor in scope, we will commit to open and transparent consultation with supervisors and colleagues in order to protect individual rights, professional reputations, and the ethical reputation of our institution.

The District will engage in self-monitoring and open information sharing to assure fairness in the distribution of resources necessary to support its mission.

### **Competence**

The District recognizes the importance of competence to the effectiveness and trustworthiness of its endeavors. The District maintains currency in all areas of responsibility and seeks and uses feedback for improved performance, while also recognizing and celebrating performance achievements. The District is aware of and will behave in accordance with the policies and practices of its various professional associations and share these practices with students and colleagues.

The District will further acknowledge and seek intervention related to impediments to competent performance, including but not limited to continuing education needs, drug and alcohol abuse, and physical or mental impediments to competent performance of our duties. The District will use appropriate systems to support rehabilitation and/or accommodation.

## **Conclusion**

The District celebrates its existence as a unique institution for the realization of human potential in the geographic area it serves and through the global connections fostered by its online programs.

The District prizes most highly the education and achievements of students, and the fostering of lifelong learning throughout its organization.

The District allows this value not only to direct our positive behavior and limit our potentially negative behavior, but to inspire us with a sense of shared purpose and a willingness to cooperate with one another in developing the highest potential in individuals and communities.