



Policy 01:005 – Code of Fair Practice

Introduction

Institutions of higher education—whether public, private, or proprietary—share:

- a common function (the offering of structured educational opportunities);
- a common commitment to meeting specified educational needs of students beyond the secondary level; and
- a common concern for and obligation to the society which permits them to exist and helps to support them, directly and indirectly.

The essence of the social obligation of these institutions is expressed in the word integrity, that is, in the expectation that an institution is what it says it is and does what it says it does. In a complex institution, with many faculty and staff members carrying out a variety of tasks and interacting with students in numerous ways, this straightforward concept of institutional integrity is continually put to a number of tests. Therefore, it is desirable that important elements of the relation between the institution and its students be set forth in a document against which institutional obligations and performance may be assessed.

To that end, this Code of Fair Practice has been adopted by the University of Montevallo.

Guiding Principles

- **Educational Objectives:** The University will define its educational objectives in ways that clearly communicate its purposes and that lend themselves to meaningful evaluation. The University's Mission and Vision provides such definition.
- **Fair Practice:** The University will maintain responsive, responsible, and fair procedures, with full commitment to equal opportunity and nondiscrimination, in all matters affecting students. This includes the provision and delivery of educational programs, the provision of necessary supporting services, and due process regarding disciplinary matters and the handling of complaints, as described in the University catalog, the *Bulletin*, and/or the student handbook, the *Fledgling*. Moreover, the University seeks to ensure that students have an appropriate role in major policy, program, procedural, and budgeting decisions.
- **Full Disclosure.** The University will provide complete and accurate information on all pertinent aspects of institutional policies and practices directly affecting students, and, where practicable, include it in University publications.

Official Publications:

- Careful attention will be given to the accuracy of the information in publications concerning the University. These include the institutional catalog, student handbook, course schedules, recruiting materials, and multi-institutional reference works.
- Publications will be reviewed annually to ensure that the material is accurate and current and that their language can be readily understood.

Admissions and Recruitment:

- The University will not pay employees commissions or bonuses for the recruitment of students nor contract with companies to provide this function.
- Admissions and recruiting staff members will be professionally qualified and will be provided with accurate information about the University and its educational programs.
- Recruiting materials will present an accurate and balanced picture of the University and its educational programs.
- Special articulation efforts will be undertaken to ensure the smooth transfer of students from other institutions, especially the community colleges of Alabama.
- Admissions requirements and procedures will be clearly stated in appropriate publications and will be adhered to, with mechanisms of appeal available in cases of disputed admissions decisions.

Financial Assistance:

- Tuition costs and other fees will be fully described in appropriate publications, particularly when charges vary according to program, level or type of study, or student status.
- Insofar as possible, students will be notified of likely additional costs, such as charges for special equipment or laboratory fees. The Student Government Association will be advised of matters pertaining to increased costs.
- The terms for refunding tuition, housing or board charges and for waiving certain financial requirements will be explained and published.
- Students will be clearly informed about all types of financial assistance for which they may be eligible, including application and award procedures. Any limitations or restrictions will be described.

Record Keeping:

- Formal statements explaining University policies with respect to student records and accounts, the maintenance of their privacy, and their availability to students will be published in the *Bulletin*.
- Efficient procedures will be maintained in handling records and in providing students with reasonable access to their records.

- Complaint or appeal mechanisms will be available for resolving difficulties that students may have concerning their records. The student's right to challenge, and request correction of, information will be made clear.

Instructional Programs and Requirements:

- The University will inform students about the full ranges and frequency of program options available to them and about all requirements for academic progress and program completion. Each student will be assigned an academic advisor. An official program audit will be maintained on seniors detailing progress toward completion of graduation requirements. Any student may request a program audit at any time.
- Students will be given advance notice of any changes in requirements or programs, and changes will not be made in a way that unduly impede the academic progress of students already enrolled.

Complaint Procedures:

- Students will be provided with both formal and informal processes for inquiries related to the resolution of academic and non-academic complaints. The informal process is intended to handle minor, routine problems or requests as quickly as possible. The formal process for written complaints will allow for appropriate due process.
- Informal complaints regarding academic and non-academic matters may be made via written inquiries or verbal requests to the office, department, college, or division from which the concern arises. Students are encouraged to first resolve complaints using an informal route before initiating a formal complaint procedure.
- Information on complaint procedures for academic and non-academic matters will be available to all students in the *Fledgling*, the *Bulletin*, and on the University website.
- The Chief Student Affairs Officer serves as coordinator of formal processes regarding non-academic formal complaints including appropriate record keeping. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs serves as coordinator of formal processes regarding academic complaints including appropriate record keeping.

Student Services and Student Conduct:

- The University will provide full and accurate descriptions of the various services offered to students. When changes in such services must take place, whether in level of services, fees, or policies, adequate notice will be provided.
- Students will be given full information on University policies and procedures with respect to their conduct. The student handbook will clearly state student rights and responsibilities.
- Students will be informed of opportunities to participate in the formulation of student services policies affecting them.
- Special services will be maintained to provide students basic medical treatment, personal counseling and/or referral to external providers, where requested.

Accreditation:

- The University will indicate in the official catalog and other appropriate materials its accreditation status and, where appropriate, its status regarding programmatic accreditation.

Conclusion

To ensure that the commitments described here are achieved, the University will undertake periodic assessments of the extent to which they are, in fact, being carried out and will initiate corrective actions, if needed.

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