

ETHICS AWARENESS TRAINING FOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Welcome to the paper/pencil version of Ethics Awareness Training for Advisory Committee Members presented by the Workforce Development Department of Olympic College

This training is required for all advisory committee members by the State Board for Community Colleges. Chapter 4.40.20 states that Advisory Committee training "...should include pertinent sections of the Washington Ethics Law as it pertains to their involvement with the college."

Objectives:

The participants will be able to

- Define ethics as related to advisory committee participation
- Identify appropriate actions as related to the five core ethical principles

Getting Started:

- Time – Most people can complete this activity in approximately thirty minutes
- Self-quiz – A self-quiz is available, beginning on page 4, complete with answers at the end of the informational pages. You may answer the questions as you read the information, or after you have completed the entire packet.
- If you provide a copy of the self-quiz to your advisory committee coordinator, a Completion Certificate will be provided to you at the next meeting you attend.

Ethics Defined:

- From Webster: "The embodiment of those values that the person or organization feels are important and spell out proper conduct and appropriate action."
- Ethics involves learning what is right or wrong and then doing the right thing. The right thing is not nearly as straightforward as conveyed in a great deal of business ethics literature (McNamara)
- Doing what is right, RIGHT!!

FIVE CORE ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Source: Washington State Executive Ethics Board booklet, *ETHICS--A Principled Approach to the Ethics in Public Service Act*. (2004, April) page 4.

“State officials and employees of government hold a public trust that obligates them, in a special way, to honesty and integrity in fulfilling responsibilities to which they are elected and appointed. Paramount in that trust is the principle that public office, whether elected or appointed, may not be used for personal gain or private advantage.” (RCW 42.52.900)

1. **Objectivity** — Public employees must place the public’s interest before any private interest or outside obligation – choices need to be made on the merits.
2. **Selflessness** — Public employees should not make decisions in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.
3. **Stewardship** — Public employees have a duty to conserve public resources and funds against misuse and abuse.
4. **Transparency** — Public employees must practice open and accountable government. They should be as open as possible about their decisions and actions, while protecting truly confidential information.
5. **Integrity** — Public employees should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organizations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.



.....A closer look

1. **Objectivity** — Public employees must place the public’s interest before any private interest or outside obligation – choices need to be made on the merits.

Example: The College’s process for purchasing and disposing of equipment is based on specific descriptions through a defined procurement process. When equipment is no longer needed for instructional purposes, it is declared surplus and available to other public agencies before being made available through a public process, such as an auction.

2. **Selflessness** — Public employees should not make decisions in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Example: An employee or advisory committee member who routinely used the Internet on College equipment to manage a personal investment portfolio and communicate information to her broker would be engaging in an ethics violation.

Example: Allowing an advisory committee member the use of an OC lab/classroom for a major event for his clients without paying a rental fee is an ethics violation.

3. Stewardship — Public employees have a duty to conserve public resources and funds against misuse and abuse.

A public resource is defined as:

Anything purchased or provided by the state—computers, phones, the internet, vehicles, conference rooms, paper, pens, etc.

Example: Allowing an advisory committee member to “sit in” on an Olympic College class because the College is providing training on new software is an ethics violation.

Example: Allowing an advisory committee member to use College equipment, such as a projector, DVD player, etc., would be an ethics violation.

4. Transparency — Public employees must practice open and accountable government. They should be as open as possible about their decisions and actions, while protecting confidential information.

Example: Minutes of advisory committee meetings are required to be on file for the past three years by the State Board for Community Colleges. The minutes need to reflect attendance of members, discussions and recommendations.

Example: Actions surrounding employees of the College would be considered confidential.

5. Integrity — Public employees should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organizations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Example: Insisting that students in Prof-Tech programs participate in work-site experiences only at businesses owned by advisory committee members would be an ethics violation.

Example: A salesperson provides small promotional items — notepads or pens — at a training conference for advisory committee members to use would not be considered an ethics violation because the items were unsolicited and of nominal value.

The following pages include the self-quiz and answer key. Remember to let the lead faculty representation of your advisory committee know that you have completed this training so you can receive a certificate.

This program is for instructional purposes only and is not to be regarded as legal advice. Employers or individuals with specific legal questions should seek the advice of counsel.

SELF-QUIZ

PART I

For each of the following questions, circle the letter of the answer that best responds to the question.

1. Ethics is defined as
 - a. Doing what is right not what is convenient
 - b. Important values of an organization
 - c. Proper conduct and appropriate action of an employee in an organization
 - d. All of above
 - e. None of Above

2. Ethics awareness training is being provided for advisory committee members because
 - a. It's grant funded
 - b. It's required
 - c. It's needed
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above

3. Advisory committee members can
 - a. Freely use state resources
 - b. Expect preferential treatment in procurement of equipment and hiring
 - c. Use equipment and classroom space whenever desired
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above

4. Advisory committee members can
 - a. Attend Olympic College classes whenever they choose
 - b. Expect to be compensated \$100 per meeting they attend
 - c. Hold company trainings at College facilities without paying fees
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above

5. Advisory committee members
 - a. Are volunteers
 - b. Serve for a prescribed term of office
 - c. Assist Pro-Tech programs with marketing and job placement
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above

SELF-QUIZ

PART II

1. **Objectivity – Scenario No. 1** – During a committee meeting focusing on upgrades to the program, an advisory committee member, who owns a local dealership, encouraged the College to purchase equipment from his firm. His company manufactures cutting-edge equipment used by 65 percent of the businesses in the industry. He is making the case that students should be exposed to quality state-of-the-art equipment, which more than half of businesses in the industry are using. The piece of equipment has a 20-year life.

At the end of the meeting, after learning of the College’s dire budget situation, he approaches the instructor and says he is willing to offer the piece of equipment at 25 percent off the going rate. The deal must be accepted within two days as he has only one in stock and another customer already lined up. Is this an ethics violation?

- a. Yes b. No c. Maybe

2. **Objectivity – Scenario No. 2** – At a Welding advisory committee meeting, a former student of the OC Shelton Welding program and a new member of the committee wants to make arrangements with his employer to donate scrap iron for students’ projects. He has been working on a welding project, which his company just finished on Friday. The scrap iron is going to be hauled to a recycling plant for disposal within the next two weeks.

As a successful graduate of the program, he knows that supplies and materials budgets are limited in the Welding program and he sees this as his opportunity to help. A representative from the College will need to come to pick up the supplies and materials and transport them to the campus. Is this an ethics violation?

- a. Yes b. No c. Maybe

3. **Selflessness – Scenario No. 1** – A new advisory committee member, who is regarded as one of the premier tax accountants in the area, calls and reports she is in a crisis with his cash flow and that he needs two laptop computers for his staff to use just until April 15. She observed at a recent advisory committee meeting that the college had laptops that were not being used. She would like to use two--just during tax season. Today is January 7. Is this an ethics violation?

- a. Yes b. No c. Maybe

4. **Selflessness – Scenario No. 2** – An advisory committee member is planning a major event for his clients and wants to use a classroom/shop space for training. He feels the space should be available at no cost to his company because he has been an avid supporter of the program for years by donating equipment and materials. He has also made a generous donation to the OC Foundation. Is this an ethics violation?

- a. Yes b. No c. Maybe

5. **Stewardship – Scenario No. 1** – An advisory committee member wants to “sit in” on an Olympic College training that the lead faculty member is offering on a new software program. The advisory committee member has been most generous in hiring OC graduates and promoting the program to colleagues. This is an in-house training for faculty and staff available at no charge. Is this an ethics violation?

- a. Yes b. No c. Maybe

6. **Stewardship – Scenario No. 2** – A Material Science advisory committee member wants to borrow 3D high-definition projection equipment for private use in her home over the weekend, when College classes are not in session. She tells the instructor that she will return the equipment on Monday.

Her own projection equipment is broken. She had planned on using it during the casino-themed fundraiser for the American Cancer Society that she is hosting at her home over the weekend. By borrowing the College’s projection equipment, she will be able to show the movie Casablanca to her guests. Is this an ethics violation?

- a. Yes b. No c. Maybe

7. **Stewardship – Scenario No. 3** – It’s 5:30 pm on a Wednesday night after a Business Technology advisory committee meeting. A committee member needs to find the best way to get to a scheduled event. She doesn’t have adequate time to go home before the event, because the advisory committee meeting lasted longer than expected – there was a lively discussion on new additions to the curriculum. She has the address for the event, but is unfamiliar with the area. Normally, she would call her husband, but he is out of town on business.

The lead faculty of the advisory committee offers the usage of the College’s state-funded computer to access MapQuest and get internet directions. Is this an ethics violation?

- a. Yes b. No c. Maybe

8. **Transparency – Scenario No. 1** – An advisory committee member has just returned from an awesome technology conference in Hawaii where she stayed at the Grand Waikikian Suites – Hilton. She highly recommends this hotel to the other advisory committee members. She notices that the minutes are being recorded and asks that this recommendation not be included in the minutes. Is this an ethics violation?

- a. Yes b. No c. Maybe

9. **Transparency – Scenario No. 2** – A teacher in one of the College’s Professional-Technical programs is rumored to have been placed on leave for inappropriate conduct with a student. At the regularly scheduled advisory committee meeting, the committee members are eager to hear the details regarding the instructor’s actions and his future. At the meeting, a College administrator indicates that no information will be shared. A long-term committee member feels that the College has a responsibility to practice open and accountable government and should share the details surrounding this employee. Is this an ethics violation?

- a. Yes b. No c. Maybe

10. **Integrity – Scenario No. 1** – An advisory committee member is the owner of a small local business with 15 employees. With the economic downturn, he has had to lay off 30% of his personnel. The committee member has asked to increase the number of interns referred to his business from 1 per quarter to 4 per quarter. Student evaluations of this employer as an internship site have always been excellent and students consistently rate the learning experience as outstanding and very meaningful. The faculty have always wanted to place more students with this employer. Is this an ethics violation?

- a. Yes b. No c. Maybe

ANSWER SHEET

- | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | A | B | C | D | E |
| 2. | A | B | C | D | E |
| 3. | A | B | C | D | E |
| 4. | A | B | C | D | E |
| 5. | A | B | C | D | E |

- | | | | | |
|------------|-------------------------------|-----|----|-------|
| 6. | Objectivity – Scenario No. 1 | Yes | No | Maybe |
| 7. | Objectivity – Scenario No. 2 | Yes | No | Maybe |
| 8. | Selflessness – Scenario No. 1 | Yes | No | Maybe |
| 9. | Selflessness – Scenario No. 2 | Yes | No | Maybe |
| 10. | Stewardship – Scenario No. 1 | Yes | No | Maybe |
| 11. | Stewardship – Scenario No. 2 | Yes | No | Maybe |
| 12. | Stewardship – Scenario No. 3 | Yes | No | Maybe |
| 13. | Transparency – Scenario No. 1 | Yes | No | Maybe |
| 14. | Transparency – Scenario No. 2 | Yes | No | Maybe |
| 15. | Integrity – Scenario No. 1 | Yes | No | Maybe |
| 16. | Integrity – Scenario No. 2 | Yes | No | Maybe |

ANSWER KEY

1. **D** All of the above
2. **E** None of the above
3. **E** None of the above
4. **E** None of the above
5. **D** All of the above
6. **Maybe** – The choice or decision of which equipment to purchase will be made on merit – price, availability, quality, etc. so all appropriate vendors must have the opportunity to provide the equipment.
No – If the faculty member complies with all regulations and obtains competing bids which are evaluated against the College’s procurement standards.
7. **No** – If the company wants to make this donation, the college can accept the donated supplies and materials.
8. **Yes** – The person will have a financial benefit from the use of state resources
9. **Yes** – The company will benefit financially by using the space which is a state resource. (Check on renting the space)
10. **Yes** – Allowing the advisory committee member to “sit-in” on the training without paying the required fees would be considered a gift of public resources.

Would you answer this differently if the advisory committee member occasionally teaches for the College as an adjunct faculty member? **No** – the person is not currently an employee.
11. **Yes** – Even though there’s no financial benefit to the advisory committee member, public employees have a responsibility to take care of the college resources and see that they are used for the intended purposes.
12. **No** – It’s a brief use of state resources and therefore not an ethics violation.
13. **No** – Her recommendation was about lodging/accommodations and would not influence the conduct or running of the program. She asked that the recommendation not be in the minutes because it was her personal feeling and outside the scope of the advisory committee meeting.
14. **No** – Personnel matters are confidential and do not fall under the transparency guideline.
15. **Yes** – Even though there’s a desire to increase the number of students in the internship experience both on the employer’s side and the colleges, the employer would benefit financially. Internship experiences are for educational purposes and should displace regular employees.