

Principles of a Just and Humane Community



“Small College, Big Results”

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PRINCIPLES OF A JUST AND HUMANE COMMUNITY

I. PREAMBLE

Institutional excellence is a collective undertaking. The power of people working together in free exchange of ideas toward a common end is a powerful force for overcoming the limitations of individual capabilities. A community that shares and lives principles of just and humane treatment liberates its members to experience that joyful and free productive collaboration that history has so often recorded as humanity's springboard to transcendent achievement.

This document asserts principles of conduct that members of a community dedicated to just and humane relations among each other subscribe to and follow.

DEFINITIONS

D1: Community =df the faculty, staff, trustees, and students of Garrett College.

D2: Expression =df the content of a message.

D3: Delivery =df the way in which a message is delivered.

D4: Exceptional Circumstances =df circumstances perilous to life, limb, or property or clear and present danger of obstruction of justice or college policy.

II. PRINCIPLE OF GOODWILL

Members of a just and humane community give other members the benefit of the doubt. They presume that other members are motivated by honest and positive professional concern for students and the college unless properly confirmed evidence suggests otherwise.

III. PRINCIPLE OF VALUED DISSENT

Members of a just and humane community value and welcome expressions of dissent as contributions to the thought process by which informed institutional decisions are developed and adopted. Such expressions are deemed to be professional and positive expressions of

concern for the welfare of students and the college unless properly confirmed evidence suggests otherwise.

III. 1 FREEDOM OF DISSENT

Taking reasoned exception to policies, procedures, and proposals is protected (III).

III. 2 IMPERSONALITY OF DISSENT

Members of a just and humane community do not personalize dissent. They presume that expressions of dissent are not personal criticisms or attacks unless properly confirmed evidence suggests otherwise (III).

IV. PRINCIPLE OF PERSONHOOD

In a just and humane community, members should receive the same courtesies and respect due humanity in general.

IV. 1 RESPECT

Members of a just and humane community communicate with respect for each other (IV).

IV. 2 HONESTY

In a just and humane community, employees communicate honestly with each other. Honesty does not imply harshness or disregard for others' feelings (IV).

IV. 3 IMPUTATION OF MOTIVATION

Members of a just and humane community refrain from imputing negative motivations unless properly confirmed evidence suggests otherwise (II).

IV. 4 ROLES AND MOTIVATIONS

Members of a just and humane community avert unwarranted attribution of motivation based on a person's assigned role or title within the community (IV).

IV. 5 REPRESENTATIVE ROLES

In a just and humane community members are not required to represent as their own positions they do not support (IV.2).

IV. 6 ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATION

The content and the delivery of a message are distinct.

IV. 6.1 In a just and humane community the content of the message is protected (III. 1).

IV.6.2 In a just and humane community, members express themselves (deliver their message) in a manner that is professional, courteous, and respectful of the recipient's and others' personhood (IV.1).

IV.7 PRINCIPLE OF DIRECT COMMUNICATION

In general, despite personal discomfort, members of a just and humane community communicate issues and concerns directly to those involved unless exceptional circumstances obtain (IV).

IV. 8 ANGER AND GOODWILL

When employees of a just and humane community feel anger, they refrain from displaying it until they have properly confirmed evidence that justifies their anger including direct and honest communication with the person with whom they are angry in order to find out whether their anger is justified (IV).

V. PROCEDURES FOR EFFECTING CHANGE

Conscientious adherence to the Principles of Goodwill and Personhood do not guaranty that all issues will be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties. In a just and humane community, reasoned pursuit of matters through established channels is protected. Such channels include committees, senates, governance procedures, the Cabinet, supervisors, the President, and the Board (III. 1).

REDRESS THROUGH LOWEST ORDER RESOLUTION

Members of a just and humane community who wish to pursue some matter beyond those directly involved proceed sequentially from lowest to highest levels of intervention and authority unless exceptional

circumstances obtain in which case an intermediary might be used (D4) (III, III.2.1, IV).

VI. PRINCIPLE OF GOVERNANCE

In a just and humane community, authority is vested in individuals for the purpose of effecting orderly and effective operations in behalf of the common welfare.

VI.1 CONCERT OF ACTION

In a just and humane community, members refrain from independent action or from obstructing or impeding decisions during the process of debate and once the process is concluded unless exceptional circumstances obtain (VI).

VI.2 MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT

During the process of debate and once the process is concluded, members of a just and humane community do their jobs in accordance with prevailing college policy and procedure unless exceptional circumstances obtain (VI).

VII. PRINCIPLE OF COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNITY

The implementation of the Principles of a Just and Humane Community depends on individuals and individual actions. If community members subscribe to the principles stated herein in theory but not in practice, these principles will not function as a living force in achieving harmony or effectiveness. The vigilant application of these principles is every community member's responsibility.