

Working Group 2 Standard II Ethics and Integrity Interim Report #2

Standard II - Ethics and Integrity

Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

Criteria

An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:

1. a commitment to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights;

Standard: II-1

Evidence Name: *Faculty Handbook, Undergraduate & Graduate Catalogs,*

- **Do we have it?** *Yes. The Faculty Handbook begins with a Statement of Academic Freedom, declaring "Faculty members have freedom of expression in accordance with the AAUP 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure." The Faculty Handbook then cites sections 1-3 of the AAUP Policy and Document Reports, 1990, 3-4 as Mercyhurst's definition of academic freedom.*
 - *Faculty Handbook, p. i., "Statement of Academic Freedom," It is quoted verbatim from the AAUP Policy and Document Reports. Washington, 1990. 3-4.*
 - *Faculty Senate By-Laws, in the Faculty Handbook, III. Governance, A.3.: "One of the roles of the One of the roles of the faculty senate is to clarify and oversee the preservation of academic freedom."*
 - *2019-2020 Graduate Catalog*
 - *019-2020 Undergraduate Catalog*
- **Do we use it?** *There are numerous sources that indicate the widespread usage of and compliance with the university's statement of academic freedom, including the Celebration of Scholars (faculty scholarship), Illumination Scholarship (student scholarship)*
- **Does it work?** *The Employee Handbook 2019, Faculty Handbook, Undergraduate and graduate catalogs as well as the Employee and Student Complaint form and Grievance Procedure adequately provides evidence that student, faculty, and staff complaints are addressed and appropriately handled.*

2. a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives;

Standard: *II-2*

Evidence Name: *Employee Handbook 2019, 2019-2020 Faculty Handbook, 2019-2020 Student Handbook, 2019 Graduate Catalog, Student Athlete Handbook*

- **Do we have it?**
 - *Page 8 of Employee Handbook, page 52 of Faculty Handbook, page 8 of Student Handbook, page 1 of Graduate Catalog, page 10 of Student Athlete Handbook – Explains our Non-Discrimination policies (i.e. LGBTQIA+, hiring, recruiting)*
 - *Page 9 of Employee Handbook outlines compensation practices for a workplace injury, page 17 outlines pay practices if classes are cancelled, page 27 outlines compensation based on performance evaluations, page 31-34 outline Compensation Policies and Procedures, page 52 outlines Unemployment Compensation, and pages 54-55 outline Worker's Compensation*
 - *Pages 16-17 of Faculty Handbook indicates compensation for course overloads and summer courses, pages 26-27 cover research compensation, pages 31-32 outline Employment and Benefit Protection and Leave benefits, and pages 43-44 indicate Faculty Salary and Benefits, and page 47 and 53 covers Worker's Comp*
- **Do we use it?**
 - *The Student, Employee, and Faculty handbooks are updated annually and become available for all employees and faculty members. The University follows all policies and procedures outlined in the handbooks.*
- **Does it work?**
 - *The Employee Handbook, Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, and Graduate Catalog adequately provide evidence that offers accurate and comprehensive information regarding LGBTQIA+ acceptance, non-discrimination policies, open hiring practices, and fair pay practices.*

Evidence Name: *Suggested Protocol for Faculty Hiring*

- **Do we have it?** *Entire document outlines how to conduct a search for a new faculty hire, published in 2012*
- **Do we use it?** *Unsure if the document is used during a new faculty hire search*
- **Does it work?** *The protocol provides evidence that an outline exists for new faculty searches and, if followed, would indicate open and non-discriminatory hiring practices*

3. a grievance policy that is documented and disseminated to address complaints or grievances raised by students, faculty, or staff. The institution's policies and procedures are

fair and impartial, and assure that grievances are addressed promptly, appropriately, and equitably;

Standard: II-3

Evidence Name: *Employee Handbook 2019, Faculty Handbook, Undergraduate & Graduate Catalogs, Employee and Student Complaint Form and Grievance Procedure*

- **Do we have it?** Page 20 in Employee Handbook – Grievance Procedure for students & employees. Explains what to do and where to locate the form.
 - Page 51 in Faculty Handbook – explains the faculty grievance policy
 - Grievance procedure and where to find the form are indicated on page 8 in the 2019/2020 Graduate Catalog and on page 11 in the 2019/2020 Undergraduate Catalog.
- **Do we use it?** There are several sources that indicate where to locate the Employee and Student Complaint Form and Grievance Procedure and who should be contacted for questions or concerns.
- **Does it work?** The Employee Handbook 2019, Faculty Handbook, Undergraduate and graduate catalogs as well as the Employee and Student Complaint form and Grievance Procedure adequately provides evidence that student, faculty, and staff complaints are addressed and appropriately handled.

4. the avoidance of conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict in all activities and among all constituents;

Evidence Name: *Employee Handbook 2019, 2019 Faculty Handbook*

- **Do we have it?** Conflict of interest policies exist in the employee and faculty handbooks.
 - *Page 20 in Employee Handbook – Page 7, Code of Ethics and Conflict, 1.3.2 “Policy” explains conflicts of interest; and on Page 8, 1.3.3 “Reporting – Whistleblower Policy” explains how to report such conflicts and other ethics violations.*
 - *Page 17 in Faculty Handbook – explains the annual disclosure and review of Conflicts of Interests that each faculty member must attend to in consultation with the Office of the Provost.*
- **Do we use it?** *The employee and faculty handbooks indicate where to locate matters pertaining to Conflict of Interest; and who should be contacted for questions or concerns. Evidence that it is used is indeterminate at this time without access to reports thereof.*
- **Does it work?** *The Employee and Faculty Handbooks show evidence that conflicts of interest that may occur among the faculty and staff are addressed and have the mechanism for being appropriately handled. Evidence that it is used is indeterminate at this time without reports thereof.*

5. fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and separation of employees;

Standard: II-5

Evidence Name: *Employee Handbook 2019, Faculty Handbook*

- **Do we have it?** *Page 8 in employee Handbook - 1.5 Notice of non-discrimination and equal opportunity.*
 - *Page 23 in Employee Handbook – 2.7 Disciplinary Action and Work Rules*
 - *Page 26 in Employee Handbook – 2.10 Employment At Will*
 - *Page 27 in Employee Handbook – 2.15 Performance Evaluations*
 - *Page 29 in Employee Handbook – 2.19 Termination of Employment*
 - *Page 22 in Faculty Handbook – Full Time Faculty Performance Criteria*
 - *Page 23 in Faculty Handbook – Faculty Evaluation*
 - *Page 28 in Faculty Handbook – Faculty Searches/Hires*
 - *Page 61 in Faculty Handbook – Withdrawal from the University*

All of these sources explain the practices in hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline and separation of employees.

- **Do we use it?** *The Employee and Faculty handbooks are updated yearly and become available for all employees and faculty members. The University follows all policies and procedures outlined in the handbooks.*
- **Does it work?** *The Employee Handbook 2019 and Faculty Handbook provides adequate evidence that speaks to the practices in hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and separation of employees.*

6. Honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting and admissions materials and practices, as well as in internal communications.

Standard: II-6

Evidence Name: *Employee Handbook 2019, Faculty Handbook, Undergraduate and Graduate Course Catalogues, Branding Standards Manual; Mercyhurst University Admissions Division of Enrollment*

- **Do we have it?**
 - *Pages 9-10 in employee Handbook - 1.7.1. Acceptable use of IT resources.*
 - *Page i in the Faculty Handbook – Statement of Academic Freedom*
 - *Pages 1-142 in the 2019 Undergraduate Course Catalogue (all academic expectations and opportunities)*
 - *Page 3-43 in 2018 Graduate Catalogue (all academic expectations and opportunities)*

- *2019 Branding Standards Manual (in its entirety)*
- *Mercyhurst University Admissions Division of Enrollment (via Mercyhurst Hub)*
 - *Erie Undergraduate Admissions statement*
 - *Graduate and Continuing Education statement*
 - *North East Admissions statement*
 - *Book T. Washington and Corry admissions statement*
 - *Student Financial Services*
 - *Marketing and Brand Management Statement*
 - *Public Relations statement*
- **Do we use it?** *The Employee and Faculty handbooks are updated yearly and become available for all employees and faculty members. The Branding Standards Manual and the Mercyhurst University Admissions Division of Enrollment are all current and appear to follow all policies and procedures outlined in their statements on communications.*
- **Does it work?** *The Employee Handbook and Faculty Handbook; Branding Standards Manual, and Mercyhurst University Admissions Division of Enrollment all provide adequate evidence that speaks to ethics and integrity in this institution's honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting and admissions materials and practices, as well as in internal communications.*

7. as appropriate to its mission, services or programs in place:

- a. **to promote affordability and accessibility;**
- b. **to enable students to understand funding sources and options, value received for cost, and methods to make informed decisions about incurring debt;**

Standard: II 7.a

Evidence: 2019-2020 Student Handbook

- **Do we have it?** *Student Handbook, Mercyhurst outlines Student Financial Services policies and procedures. The section also outlines **Student Billing Schedule, Tuition and Fee Cost, scholarships, financial aid award awarding policies, and Loan Payment methods and options.** This publication is updated on an annual basis, occurring during the summer after new rates and costs are published.*
- **Do we use it?** *The Residence Life (RL) Team produces and distributes the Student Handbook each fall electronically to all students. The RL also uses the handbook in adjudicating all conduct offenses.*
- **Does it work?** *The 2019-2020 Student Handbook adequately provides evidence that offers accurate and comprehensive information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment and refunds.*

Standard: II 7.b

Evidence: 2019-2020 Undergraduate and Graduate Student Course Catalogs, Entrance and Exit Loan interviews

- **Do we have it?** 2019-2020 *Undergraduate (p.34-46), Graduate (p.14-21) Course Catalogs, and Entrance and Exit Loan interviews. The sections provide a thorough examination of tuition, fees, room and board, loan and grant education, the financial aid awarding process, campus amenities, SFS calendar and procedures, and enrollment requirements. This document is updated by the office of academic affairs on an annual basis.*
- **Do we use it?** *The undergraduate and graduate course catalogs are made available to all students on the internal and external websites. The Entrance and Exit Loans Interviews are required by the federal government before taking the loan and prior to graduation.*
- **Does it work?** *The 2019-2020 Undergraduate and Graduate Course Catalogs adequately provide evidence that offers accurate and comprehensive information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment and refunds.*

8. compliance with all applicable federal, state, and Commission reporting policies, regulations, and requirements to include reporting regarding:

- a. the full disclosure of information on institution-wide assessments, graduation, retention, certification and licensure or licensing board pass rates;**
- b. the institution’s compliance with the Commission’s Requirements of Affiliation;**
- c. substantive changes affecting institutional mission, goals, programs, operations, sites, and other material issues which must be disclosed in a timely and accurate fashion;**
- d. the institution’s compliance with the Commission’s policies; and**

Standard: II 8.a

Evidence: Programmatic Accreditation Document, Graduation Data Document, Assessment Handbook, Individual academic program webpage (ex. PA, AT),

- **Do we have it?** *The documents contain information adequate demonstration of institution-wide assessment, graduation and retention rates, and certification and licensure or licensing board pass rates.*
- **Do we use it?** *Graduation and retention data are shared internally and publicly, institutional-wide assessment is available on the assessment and planning webpage as is the certification/licensure list.*
- **Does it work?** *These documents adequately provide evidence that offers accurate and comprehensive information regarding information on institution-wide assessments, graduation, retention, certification and licensure. The workgroup recommends having a central place to list accredited program board pass rates. Whether for institutional and/or public use, it is challenging to find information on campus-wide assessment. Individual programs publicize licensing board pass rates on their webpages, (e.g., Physician Assistant, Athletic Training) but there is no central location. The following two resources might be useful to the steering committee: NCAA Academic Success, National Center for Education Statistics
<https://web3.ncaa.org/aprsearch/asrsearch>,
<https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?q=mercyhurst&s=all&id=213987>*

Standard: II 8.b

Evidence: *MSCHE Statement of Accreditation Status*

- **Do we have it?** The evidence provides documentation of the institution's compliance with the Commission's requirements of Affiliation.
- **Do we use it?** *The document is updated when warranted by the assessment and planning office and is available on their webpage.*
- **Does it work?** *These documents adequately provide evidence that offers accurate and comprehensive information regarding the institution's compliance with the Commission's Requirements of Affiliation.*

Standard: II 8.c

Evidence: Action Plan Form, CMHE Self-study, EADA, NCAA Academic Success Rate, Faculty handbook.

- **Do we have it?** *The documents include policy and procedure for making substantive changes and have a standard timeline for submission.*
- **Do we use it?** *The action plan form is very useful and has a direct impact on goals, mission, and programs. The Faculty handbook creates structure and policy for substantive changes.*
- **Does it work?** *The evidence provides documentation of assessment of substantive change as we can compare data and assessment over time.*

Standard: II 8.d

Evidence: **MSCHE Statement of Accreditation Status**

- **Do we have it?** *The evidence provides documentation of the institution's compliance with the commission's policies.*
- **Do we use it?** *The document updated with when warranted by the assessment and planning office and is available on their webpage.*
- **Does it work?** *These documents adequately provide evidence that offers accurate and comprehensive information regarding the institution's compliance with the Commission's Requirements of Affiliation.*

9. periodic assessment of ethics and integrity as evidenced in institutional policies, processes, practices, and the manner in which these are implemented.

Standard: II-9

Evidence Name: *Faculty Handbook, Student Handbook, Undergraduate & Graduate Catalogs,*

Do we have it? Various policies and processes exist to provide guidance for institutional ethics and integrity. Assessments of ethics and integrity in institutional policies, processes, practices and implementation are based on various sources and

- *Employee Handbook, Section 1 General Policies, see especially Section 1.3 Code of Ethics and Conduct, page 7*
 - *Student Conduct Code in the Student Handbook (page 8) and the 2019-2020 Graduate Catalogue.*
 - *Academic Honesty Policy in the 2019-2010 Undergraduate Catalogue*
 - *Various sections of the Faculty Handbook provide policies and procedures for the implementation of ethics and integrity, including*
 - *Section II Faculty Governance,*
 - *Section V General Faculty Policies,*
 - *Section VI Tenure Policies and Procedures,*
 - *Section VII General University Policies (Sexual Harassment, Non-Retaliation, Faculty Grievance, Non-Discrimination, etc.), the academic evaluation processes and administrator evaluation processes exist to promote and maintain academic and administrative ethics and integrity.*
 - *Assessment Handbook*
 - *Mission Self Study*
 - *Board Committee Charters*
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- **Do we use it?** *A wide range of sources indicate substantial integration of the university's mission and core values across the entire range of its operations, areas, and stakeholders. Opportunities for growth and development might exist for comprehensive periodic assessment in this area.*
 - **Does it work?** *The sources above provide adequate evidence of institutional policies, processes, and practices that promote and maintain ethics and integrity. Opportunities exist for the expansion of centralized and comprehensive assessment of ethics and integrity across the various areas and levels of the university. The extent to which various types of evidence of ethics and integrity is for institutional assessment of ethics and integrity is indeterminate at this time.*