

## CHAPTER X - CODE OF CONDUCT: ACADEMIC EMPLOYEES

George Brown College is mandated by law and by the community it serves to provide an educational environment that demonstrates professionalism and academic currency, values diversity, and respects the processes and traditions of learning.

The terms of this mandate are prescribed by the founding documents of the College; by the laws to which the College is subject; by the collective agreements that govern academic employees and support staff; and by the operational policies and procedures that the College has adopted (see Appendix C).

Central to these documents and the processes that created them is the *implicit* assumption of professionalism and appropriate professional conduct on the part of all College employees.

This code of conduct is designed to provide an *explicit* definition of the minimal standards of professional conduct expected of all faculty. It represents, for the College, a benchmark of expectations about faculty conduct and defines the boundaries within which a rewarding and mutually supportive learning environment can be created.

For the purposes of this document, the terms "academic employees" and "faculty" are used interchangeably to refer to full-time, partial-load, part-time, and sessional professors, instructors, counsellors, and librarians.

### A BENCHMARK STATEMENT ON PROFESSIONALISM

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Faculty are expected to proceed in their daily duties in a manner that upholds the dignity of their profession, and to exhibit a commitment to learning, an enthusiasm for teaching, and a concern for the well-being of students, staff, the College, and the broader society in which all exist.

## 1 PROFESSIONALISM AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

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George Brown College expects all faculty in its employ to conform to the explicit standards of professionalism defined in this document.

Academic employees who demonstrate behaviour that does not comply with or that is inconsistent with the minimal standards of professionalism contained in this document may be subject to the range of disciplinary actions specified in the collective agreement and the College's Progressive Discipline Policy.

### 1.1 Scope

The term "professionalism" is used to describe adherence by academic employees to an acceptable standard in the method, manner, and spirit in which they perform their duties. The professional conduct of academic employees at George Brown College is assessed in relation to four distinct areas of College activity:

- academic preparation
- classroom conduct
- relationships with students outside the classroom

- relationships with other faculty and staff.

### **1.2 Adherence to Policies**

The expectations of the College with relation to each of these areas will be described in detail in the following sections of this document. The College also expects that academic employees will:

- familiarize themselves with College policies that are relevant to their responsibilities;
- adhere to those policies to the best of their ability;
- assist and encourage others to adhere to the policies – for example, by directing a student to the appropriate channels for appeal;
- draw perceived problems with the policies to the attention of the Office of the Vice President, Academic;
- familiarize themselves with and adhere to the relevant provisions of the *Ontario Human Rights Code* (see Appendix D) and the *College Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment*;
- familiarize themselves with the class definitions of Professor, Counsellor, Instructor, and Librarian in the current collective agreement; and
- familiarize themselves with and adhere to the policies regarding Intellectual Property, Academic Freedom (see Section 6), and Academic Dishonesty (see Chapter 14 – Research Ethics).

### **1.3 Inappropriate Behaviours**

Academic employees will not use the classroom or online environment to:

- use scurrilous, profane, or obscene language;
- make remarks or engage in conduct that is racist, sexist, or in other ways discriminatory, as defined by the *Ontario Human Rights Code* (see Appendix D), nor permit any student in any class to do so;
- engage in behaviour or make remarks that could reasonably be interpreted as threatening, nor allow any student in any class to engage in such behaviour; or
- encourage, by inaction or innuendo, the development of a classroom environment that is fractious, disrespectful of others, or inconsistent with the *Code of Student Conduct: Academic*;
- promote their personal, religious, political, social, or business agendas;
- spread negative, malicious, or unkind remarks or rumours.

### **1.4 Online Environment/Communication Facilities**

All employees must apply professional and ethical standards at all times when accessing, using, and distributing information and materials through use of learning technologies. Staff must use computing and communication facilities and services only for the purposes for which they are authorized. Technologies must not be used to access, use or distribute materials that are obscene, vulgar, or pornographic, or that might be perceived by others as harassment or intimidation.

The College believes that every user bears the primary responsibility for the material she/he chooses to access, send, or display. A full description of policies in this area (technology and accessibility) are located in the Appendices.

Note: All policies regarding academic staff conduct and responsibilities also apply to the online teaching environment.

### **1.5 Copyright**

Academic employees will abide by all copyright laws, which apply to the internet, print and all other media. Under certain conditions faculty can use and copy original works. For information on the copy write laws please refer to the Academic Resource Centre's Web Site.

Employees who are not familiar with these laws may clarify their responsibilities with any College librarian. The College will not provide assistance or protection relating to charges arising from violation of copyright law.

## **2 ACADEMIC PREPARATION**

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### **2.1 Academic Readiness**

All faculty are expected to be academically prepared to teach assigned courses. Faculty will demonstrate academic readiness by maintaining, developing, and expanding competence in their field (s). Specifically, academic employees will:

- explore materials in and relating to their field (s);
- use available Professional Development days in a productive manner;
- keep abreast of current research and technical advances in their field; and
- maintain familiarity with current standards of practice in their field.

### **2.2 Course Delivery**

All academic employees are expected to perform activities in advance of class that are necessary to ensure adequate delivery of the courses they have been assigned. Specifically, academic employees will:

- prepare course outlines for the courses they are teaching or become familiar with outlines that already exist;
- have clear learning goals for each class;
- select texts and order films, videos, and other materials for each class in a timely fashion;
- gather supplementary materials for distribution as needed; and
- consult with colleagues teaching the same course.
- share information relevant to fields of instruction and discuss teaching strategies with appropriate faculty;
- discuss issues involving androgogy and curriculum development with those involved;

## **3 CLASSROOM CONDUCT**

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Academic employees will refrain from using class time to promote their personal, religious, political, social, or business agendas and will refuse to allow students to use class time for these purposes. This guideline is not intended to restrict the freedom of academic employees or students to express personal views of relevance to topics being taught or discussed.

### **3.1 Classroom Environment**

Academic employees will treat all students with courtesy and respect. In each and every class they teach, academic employees will maintain a climate in which learning can flourish and in which all students are treated with equality and respect.

### **3.2 Review of College Policies**

Academic employees will ensure the following are covered with their students:

- familiarize students with College policies and codes relating to student rights and responsibilities;
- discuss the *Notice of Collection of Personal Information* (see Appendix J) with students;
- ensure that students are made aware of appropriate campus evacuation procedures (see *College Policy on Emergencies*, item 5.2.1).

### **3.3 Review of Course Description**

Academic employees will provide their students with a course description and review it with them at the first class. The course description will clearly state:

- the title of the course, the dates of the course, and the number of instructional hours involved;
- the name and office number of the professor or instructor;
- the title(s) of the text(s) and any other learning resources required for the course;
- the evaluation procedure that will be used in the course, including specific percentages for items that will count toward the final grade; and
- the general goals of the course, including, if possible, a detailed outline of lecture topics, reading assignments, due dates for projects or written work, and test dates.

### **3.4 Class Protocols and Content**

Academic employees will:

- ensure that all activities in the class pertain to the learning objectives of the class;
- commence each class on time;
- inform students of the procedure to be followed in the event that their class is cancelled;
- be in the classroom, ready to start teaching, at the prescribed time, with technical aids on hand;
- use allotted instructional time – teaching for 50 minutes for a one-hour class and negotiating a consensus with their students regarding breaks for two- and three-hour classes;
- end classes on time. Classroom time should be managed so that the room is vacated on schedule and other classes are not inconvenienced by being forced to wait;
- encourage open discussion and feedback from students regarding the course and the manner in which it is being taught as a follow-up to the required written course evaluations;
- clearly inform students that if they do not pick up their work and if they make no provisions for their work to be picked up, then that work will be destroyed four weeks after the beginning of the following semester or academic year.

### **3.5 Assignments and Grades**

Academic employees will:

- mark all tests and assignments promptly and give explanations of grades and feedback to students in an appropriate manner;
- return graded student assignments in a timely fashion;
- keep a record of student grades.

Records of marks are to be kept for a minimum of three years and, if destroyed, must be disposed of in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

## **4 RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM**

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Interaction with students outside the classroom occurs in two contexts:

- contact with students that is didactic in nature, as when faculty assist students with their work in areas such as Learning Resource Centres and labs, or meet with students in offices or elsewhere to provide help with course materials or feedback on performance
- contact with students that is non-didactic in nature, as when faculty interact with students in areas such as lounges or cafeterias or at social functions held on or off-campus.

### **4.1 General Interactions**

Academic employees will:

- demonstrate courtesy, respect, patience, and a willingness to help in their interactions with students in either context;
- demonstrate the spirit of professionalism by encouraging students to approach them outside the classroom to clarify issues of concern and by providing reasonable assistance with course work at a time that is agreed upon by both parties;
- respond to special needs identified by a student by directing the student to appropriate resources within the College that might be of assistance in meeting course objectives;
- consult, where required, with Disabilities Services or with their Chair or Dean for help in determining how to reasonably accommodate a student with special needs.

### **4.2 Conflict Resolution**

Faculty will strive actively to resolve conflict between themselves and any student and should make an effort to resolve conflict between students;

In the event of conflict between faculty and student, the faculty member will meet with the student and maintain an open, non-confrontational attitude while attempting to resolve the problem at hand.

In the event of conflict between students, faculty will intervene by making verbal attempts at conciliation; if these are not successful, faculty should immediately notify the appropriate authority according to the procedural guidelines established in the *College Policy on Emergencies* and the *College Policy on Student Discipline in Non-academic Matters*.

Academic employees should refrain from physical intervention to resolve a conflict.

Academic employees should behave toward students with circumspection, avoiding conduct on College premises that might result in the imposition of College sanctions or civil or criminal proceedings.

### **4.3 Professional Boundaries**

To maintain their professional relationships, faculty will not:

- develop a friendship with a student, the terms of which might be misunderstood by the student;
- become sexually intimate with a student currently enrolled in a course being taught or evaluated by the faculty member;
- involve students in their own personal problems;
- involve a student in any interpersonal difficulties the faculty member might have with any other member of the College community; or
- become involved in any situation with a student or group of students that is inconsistent with the role of an academic leader, for example, by getting drunk or using prohibited substances on College premises.

### **4.4 Conflicts of Interest**

If a pre-existing relationship might cause a conflict of interest between the faculty member and the student (for example, if the academic employee is a relative, spouse, close friend, or lover of the student), arrangements should be made to assign the student to a different section of the same class.

In the event that no other section of the class exists, the Chair of the student's program should be approached to resolve the issue and to protect the interests of the faculty member, the student, and other students.

## **5 RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER FACULTY AND STAFF**

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Behaviour that is inappropriate inside the classroom (see 1.1) is equally inappropriate in relationships with other faculty and staff.

### **5.1 Conduct with Faculty**

When interacting with other academic employees/colleagues, faculty will:

- behave with courtesy, respect, patience, helpfulness, and a general spirit of goodwill in their interactions;
- share educational resources such as audiovisual equipment, computer facilities, and learning resource materials;
- vacate classrooms in a timely fashion so as not to inconvenience incoming faculty;
- leave classrooms reasonably clean and orderly, with boards cleared and seating arrangements restored to the layout standard for that classroom, so that incoming faculty will not have to perform housekeeping chores before beginning class;
- refuse to engage in or condone gossip, innuendo, or any other activities that would malign or otherwise damage a colleague;
- refrain from talking about a faculty member or another course or program in a public manner or with students. Instead, students should be encouraged to share their concerns with either the faculty member involved or the faculty member's chair.

Faculty who are directly affected by unprofessional or troublesome conduct on the part of a colleague should express their concern directly to that colleague in an attempt to clarify and correct the situation. Should such an intervention be unsuccessful (that is, if the behaviour persists), faculty members should advise the colleague that they will speak to the appropriate Chair.

Faculty will, without exception, maintain confidentiality when attempting to resolve issues and will base all reports of concern on direct behavioural observations of the colleague involved. Whenever possible, these observations should be documented in writing.

## **5.2 Conduct with College Support Staff**

Faculty are expected to:

- treat support staff with courtesy and respect;
- behave toward support staff in a circumspect manner, avoiding conduct or comments that are or could be reasonably construed as being discriminatory in nature or that might result in the imposition of College sanctions or civil or criminal proceedings;
- respect the professionalism of support staff and to honour and abide by the systems and procedures that support staff members have established to enable them to function effectively;
- assist support staff by handing in time sheets, records of grades, and other documents that must be processed according to a College schedule at the times requested by support staff and in the format specified;
- respect the terms and conditions of the support staff collective agreement and individual job descriptions;
- provide support staff with appropriate advance notice to complete requested work;
- keep support staff fully apprised of any changes in the nature or timing of the services they are expected to perform.

## **5.3 Conduct with College Administrative Staff**

Faculty will:

- treat College administrative staff with courtesy and will ensure that their activities in the College will not impede the effective operation of their department or the College;
- notify their manager at the earliest reasonable opportunity if, for reasons of illness or accident, they are unable to meet their assigned classes and provide, if possible, appropriate instructions to be given to their classes to be carried out during their absence;
- provide their manager with appropriate written notice of requests for vacations at non-traditional times;
- avoid problems of professional conflict of interest by ensuring that their manager is aware of and has approved the terms and conditions of any additional employment or contracted activity that could impede their ability to fulfill their assigned responsibilities in the College;
- accurately complete essential academic records, such as exemption requests and amended grade notices, within specified time frames and submit grade calculations within specified times following the end of the semester.

## **5.4 College Equipment**

Faculty will:

- demonstrate a concern for the appropriate use and maintenance of all equipment provided by the College, such as computers, photocopiers, and test-scoring devices;
- ensure that College services such as photocopying and postage are used for College purposes only.

## **6 ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

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Academic staff are entitled to the exercise of academic freedom. Academic freedom includes the right, without constriction to:

- freedom of expression in the learning environment,
- freedom in carrying out research and disseminating and publishing the results thereof,
- freedom in producing and performing creative works,
- freedom to engage in service to the college and the community,
- freedom to express their opinion about the college, its administration, or the system in which they work,
- freedom from institutional censorship and
- freedom to participate in professional or representative academic bodies.

In exercising such freedom, there is a responsibility to adhere to the law as it pertains to Human Rights and Hate Propaganda as defined under the Criminal Code of Canada, any other relevant legislation, the code of conduct for academic faculty and to respect the academic freedom of all others.