Institutional Integrity

Centralia College states and defines high ethical standards in its mission, values, and commitment. These standards are reflected in policies such as academic freedom, conflict of interest, student rights, appropriate use of technology, and professional development. They are also incorporated in procedures which pertain to due process and all applicable laws such as the Open Meetings Act and Public Records Act.

Specific bylaws developed by the Board of Trustees define powers and procedures including affirmative action, and all personnel and administrative policies. General ethical principles and rules regarding conflicts of interest are specifically defined in the Board Policy Manual most recently revised in June 1998.

The Board of Trustees is committed to the implementation of policy governance and is currently developing its policies. Such policies will include Ends Statements, Governance Process, Board-Staff Relationship, and Executive Limitations. Although the Board has not set a specific timeline for this development process, with consistent progress, it hopes to complete it by fall of 2000.

All college policies and procedures are available to employees through their respective administrative units. All full-time and permanent part-time employees receive a copy of the College Handbook most recently updated in December 1998, which includes all policies, procedures, and practices related to employees and students.

All permanent, benefited employees on standard contracts (full-time faculty, pro-rata faculty, full-time and permanent part-time classified employees, and exempt employees) receive orientation to their jobs and responsibilities by the Director of Human Resources. All adjunct faculty are oriented by their respective dean and department chair, and all part-time hourly employees are oriented by their supervisor. Each employee receives a copy of the College Handbook with additional copies available in vice-presidents' offices and in the library.

A brief statement in the College catalog refers to the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, and copies are available at the Information
Desk in Student Services. In addition, all matriculated and non-matriculated students are given a copy and specifically any student charged with an offense receives a copy.

Centralia College maintains its institutional integrity through an open governing process: clearly stated policies and procedures available to all faculty, staff, and students; open lines of communication with all constituencies including the public; and avenues to redress grievances.

Centralia College Board members, administrators, faculty, and staff are active in the community and receive continuous input about the College. Board meetings are open, and public hearings are required by law for many changes in policy or procedures. The Board periodically conducts environmental scans seeking community input on college performance, direction, and future learning needs. The College newspaper provides for full freedom of the press for student opinion.

(Available in Exhibit Room: Board Bylaws and Policies, College Mission Statements, College Handbook (which defines college organization, governance, structure, practices and procedures which affect all employees), Student Complaint Procedure, Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities)

**Institutional Evaluation**

The institution’s commitment to overall effectiveness is evidenced in several ways. Strategic planning which began in 1994 was originally under the direction of the vice president of instruction. The focus of this effort was to help the College define itself, determine its service niche, and set a future course. Focus groups from within the College and the community helped the Strategic Planning Committee establish eight priorities to guide the future directions of the College and the College’s instructional offerings which in turn helped focus all other support areas of the College.
All campus constituencies were asked to set goals by linking them to one or more of the priorities. In this way, all decisions were assessed by their demonstrated tie to a priority. All College departments and programs could easily see the relatedness of every facet to the College.

In 1999, the vice-president of finance and administration became the administrator in charge of strategic planning. The efforts are focused on developing clear goals, and activities to meet those goals of increasing enrollment FTE’s. These efforts come at a time when many community colleges in the state are experiencing an enrollment downturn. As a result of this emphasis, enrollment targets and program mix have become more clearly linked as the College strives to improve effectiveness in providing the educational opportunities that students seek.

Strategic planning and assessment continue to provide parallel avenues for developing institutional effectiveness. While strategic planning focuses on administrative outcomes, assessment focuses on instructional programs and student success outcomes. Because strategic planning and assessment are dynamic functions leading to the College’s continuous improvement, regular evaluations keep both processes moving forward. As a result, evaluation is an integral part of the institutional culture.

The College evaluates itself through regular review of its board policies, college mission, general operating policies and procedures related to all employees, policies and procedures related to students, and procedures related to college publications. Examples of active review and revision include:

- The College Mission Statement reviewed as part of the 1980 accreditation self-study, revised, and accepted March 2, 1996.
- A College Council representing faculty, classified, and administrative staff was established in
September 1993 to assist in inter-departmental communication and participatory governance.

- A Strategic Planning Committee was established in 1994. As part of Strategic Planning, the College Mission Statement was revised in 1995 and 1996, approved by the College Council, and now guides institutional strategic planning efforts.
- General operating policies and procedures which apply to all college employees are reflected in the College Handbook and in constituent contact.

**College Handbook:**

The College Handbook includes all policies, procedures, and practices which affect employees. Review and revision is an on-going process as changes occur and updates are sent to all staff. Input is solicited from all unit cabinets, the College Council, and cross-unit committees. A complete updated handbook is sent to all staff within a 3-year cycle. (The most comprehensive review and update was completed during summer and fall of 1998). The College Handbook is issued to all permanent faculty and staff. Other copies are available with each vice president and in the library.

**Faculty Agreement:**

A faculty contract representing all faculty is negotiated every three years with local 4469 Centralia College Federation of Teachers, affiliated with the Washington Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers. The most recently negotiated contract was adopted in fall of 1998 and is in effect through spring 2001.
**Classified Staff Contract:**

Union members of Centralia's classified staff are represented by Local 862 of the Washington Federation of State Employees, an affiliate of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFL-CIO). Local 862 represents Centralia College classified staff, Green Hill classified staff, and staff from the local Department of Social and Health Services office. The contract was negotiated in September 1999.

**Procedures specific to executive/administrative/professional (exempt) employees:**

Members of the "exempt" staff are contracted on an annual basis (with the exception of the president who receives a three year contract). These employees are exempt from State Civil Service and Federal Fair Labor Standards Act provisions. They are subject to:

- Policies in the Administrative Personnel Policies section of the Board Policy Manual in Chapter 3, "Personnel Policies"
- General practices and procedures that cover all employees in Chapter 3 of the College Handbook and policies in Chapter 4.04 of the College Handbook "Administrative and Exempt Personnel"

New exempt employees receive position descriptions that describe the expectations of their position. Annual evaluations require:

- Identification of annual goals and reporting on achievement of previously stated goals
- Training and professional development plans
- A self assessment of overall performance

Grievances are handled in an informal manner with supervisors, vice-presidents, and/or the College president unless related to contractual or regulatory compliance, in which case other formal or legal processes are available.
Students:

Policies and procedures related to students are published in Chapter 6 of the College Handbook and in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. The Student Code was last revised in October 1999.

College Publications

The College Handbook Ch. 3 Practices and Procedures 3.43 "Printing and Publications" and 3.44 "Public Information Services" define college publications, management standards, and coordination by the Public Information Office (PIO). The PIO adheres to the Statement of Ethical Principles adopted by the Association of Press and Managing Editors. A Graphic Standards Handbook (revised 1993) defines basic consistency for use of the College logo and fonts. A standing committee reviews the quarterly class schedule. The webmaster and PIO review all web postings for consistency to the same standards as print publications. The College Handbook Ch. 6 Student Information 6.29.5 "Student Publications" refers to the Student Programs Office for details regarding student publications.

The College makes every effort to ensure the accuracy and consistency of its publications by requiring all major promotional and informational publications to go through a centralized preparation and review. This is coordinated by the PIO under the vice-president of finance and administration and through the Office of the President. The publications staff includes a full-time public information officer, a 26 hour per week graphic designer/illustrator, and shared support staff.

Major publications such as the biennial College catalog undergo extensive review, starting at the department level and moving through other processes and checkpoints. The quarterly class schedule begins at faculty and department level, moving to a final review committee. Final proofing includes a review by appropriate division administrators prior to printing.
Routine press releases are sent to the PIO for preparation, review, and approval. The PIO is the source for all press releases, and the PIO is the designated College spokesperson for work with the media. PIO responses are reviewed by the College president or MART (Marketing and Recruitment Team) as appropriate. (Examples of College publications are available in Exhibit Room)

**Conflict of Interest**

Board and College policy define and prohibit conflict of interest in the Board Policy Manual and in the College Handbook. These publications apply to all employees, in accordance with state ethics laws.

Most questions of conflict of interest involve alleged misuse of authority, personal gain at state expense, or commercial activities by College employees outside the College. Policies and procedures are in place to monitor and review potential conflicts of interest. All procedures regarding alleged employee performance or non-performance issues include a process for redress.

Questions of misuse of authority generally involve receiving gifts, inappropriate supervision, and nepotism. State law limits all state employees to gifts valued under $50; however, no gifts may be received by anyone responsible to approve contracts. Any alleged misuse or inappropriate use of authority is investigated by the College in accordance with College policies and appropriate negotiated agreements. Standards for what constitutes nepotism are defined and potential issues are monitored. Questions typically involve the nature of the relative relationship; such as a person being supervised by an uncle or aunt. Issues involving copyright laws are specifically addressed in written policies.

Questions of personal gain at state expense have included College support for text authorship, and use of College phones, computers, fax machines, or software for personal purposes. Adoption of a faculty member’s own text must be determined by a third party; such as, a committee for text approval. Revenues for faculty-written texts are
handled individually and considerations include when the text was written and College resources used.

Use of College resources is generally considered on a "de minimis standard." If the use accrues "minimal or no cost" to the College, it is generally allowed. Recent issues involved use of faxes for personal purposes and listing of College phone numbers for personal business. Use of the Internet by faculty and staff has not raised issues. One serious issue was raised recently concerning when a person represents himself/herself or when a person represents the College. The case was resolved in court, and the College subsequently developed a procedure to clarify the issue.

All alleged violations of conflict of interest are referred to the State Auditor's Office for outside investigation. In the last several years, two incidents are known to the Director of Human Resources. In one case, a College phone number was listed for personal purposes and this was discontinued. The other involved alleged use of state property for personal gain and resulted in a resignation.

In summary, the College regularly monitors potential conflicts of interest and responds appropriately to preserve high ethical standards.

**Academic Freedom**

The College shows its commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge through a general practice of openness and specific policies related to "academic freedom" in the classroom.

Policies specifically related to academic freedom are addressed in the Faculty Handbook ("Academic Freedom" page 3), in the Adjunct Faculty Handbook ("Academic Freedom" page 11), and in the College Handbook ("Academic Freedom" Chapter 4).

The culture of the College itself seeks open communication among students, college employees, and the community. Many College events and functions such as open houses, sports, music, and drama events are open to the public. All board meetings are open to the public, and many
student programs such as the Expressions Speaker Series are open and well attended by the public. During election campaigns, the College provides candidate and issue forums. Also community service classes are designed to enhance educational interaction between the community and the College.

Within the College, several efforts encourage various types of employees to interact. The College Council was established to facilitate broader communication across disciplines and work units. Major changes in policy, programs, and practice are discussed and considered, and meetings are open to the whole campus community. The annual campus conference/retreat brings most employees together off-campus to plan for the future. A regular classified retreat focuses on topics of concern to classified employees.

Training funds help support faculty, classified, and exempt employees pursue professional development, and the state tuition waiver program assists classified staff in furthering their education or skills in the workplace. The College pays for employee classes subject to supervisor approval.

**Analysis**

Centralia College has a professional development fund for faculty who pursue further education or supplemental experience. However, there are minimal funds dedicated to the professional development of exempt employees. The tuition waiver certainly helps, but other costs are not taken into consideration. This issue needs to be addressed by several areas on campus to discuss needs, policies, and funding sources.

Another area of concern addresses the lack of College policy or procedure regarding the training of new supervisors. Supervisory personnel do not participate in a set process of orientation regarding supervision of staff. The College might consider a mentoring program or pairing similar to that used for new faculty.
Standard Nine Future Directions

- Research available funding sources for exempt professional development
- Develop a training procedure for new supervisory personnel