HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ETHICS WORKGROUP MEETING
Minutes
Thursday, February 14, 2008—3:00 p.m.
Brandon Campus—BACA 211

Attendance: Sue Flaig, Alicia Ellison, Paul Bishop, Tim McArter, Bonnie Carr, Carlton Williams, Felix Haynes

Sue Flaig called the meeting to order at 3:10 and welcomed the group.

REVIEW OF MINUTES:
Minutes from last meeting were distributed for review. Tim McArter was incorrectly identified in minutes as Jim McArter. All members present approved the minutes with the correction.

MEETING TIMES:
Sue explained that there are three conflicting dates in our upcoming meeting schedule: March 13th, April 10th (faculty Spring Institute), and March 27th (Spring Break). After discussion of alternate dates, the group agreed upon the following substitutions:

- Monday, March 12th, 3 p.m., Brandon Campus (in place of March 13th mtg)
- Wednesday, March 19th, 3 p.m. Brandon Campus (in place of March 27th mtg)
- Wednesday, April 9th, 3 p.m., Brandon Campus (in place of April 10th mtg)

Alfreda Bashir will check on the availability of BACA 211 and advise the Workgroup.

Sue confirmed the meeting schedule with substituted dates as follows:

DISCUSSION OF LITERATURE:
Sue asked the group if they have all had an opportunity to review the handouts from the first meeting or view the website. She mentioned that in looking at the handouts, she found some patterns of basic ideas and similar wording. She presented, as a starting point, a draft document on the Code of Ethical Behavior for the group’s review and discussion.

During review of the document, the group expressed issues and concerns in the following sections:

Employment of Relatives:

Carlton Williams noted that since there are many more degrees of relatives than noted, we might need to be more specific in our language for this section.
Policy
Bonnie Carr asked whether reference to “contractors and their agents” should be included in the statement. She indicated that this might be addressed to Vonda Melchior.

Sue asked who would be the appropriate person employees go to if they have questions or concerns regarding ethics policies: should it be the HR Director or the College Attorney as the legal agent of the college, or other(s)? She indicated she would list the College Attorney for now until further direction from the President.

Sue pointed out two good college resources for ethics policies from the literature previously handed out: (1) the Business Contract Policy for Oberlin College contained some good language and included situational question/answer sections on disclosure and confidential matters that is helpful; (2) the Bellevue Community College’ ethics policy was helpful as a guide for format and content.

Solicitation or Acceptance of Gifts
The group suggested listing the minimum dollar amount employees may accept as a gift or reward. The state of Florida uses $25 as a minimum amount.

Doing Business with HCC
Carlton Williams pointed out that we may need to be more expansive in determining what might create a conflict by clarifying “relationships” in greater detail.

Unauthorized Compensation
It was suggested that the word “unauthorized” be replaced with some other term as there may be many reasons why something could be unauthorized. It was decided that the word “inappropriate” be used instead.

Misuse of Position: It appears that there may be some wording omitted from this section. Sue Flaig will clean up positioning issues in this section.

Confidentiality
Sue Flaig mentioned that the President is very insistent that employees be held accountable for speaking up when they know something is unethical or inappropriate. She noted that this section is also important for all HR-related matters.

Carlton Williams mentioned that we need to be careful to strengthen the section to include protection against “retaliation”.
Disclosure and Complaint Procedures

The group discussed whether to accept “anonymous” complaints or if it will be necessary for someone to disclose identity when issuing complaints. Sue Flaig said she would come up with something that all can review.

Employment of Relatives

Felix Haynes stated that the President does not want two relatives hired at the same campus. The question of whether this applies to student assistants (work-study students) need to be investigated.

Procedures for Approval

Wording regarding “department head” needs to be deleted.

Violations and Penalties

‘without prior approval’ needs to be deleted.

Consensual Sexual/Romantic Relationships

It was noted that in this section, we will need to state parameters very clearly, adding students to the second paragraph.

DISCUSSION OF PRODUCT:

The group decided to table the discussion of the format and distribution for a future meeting.

Sue summarized tasks to be completed from discussions throughout meeting:

- Sue Flaig to investigate who would be the appropriate person(s) to answer questions employees may have regarding ethics which are not clearly identified in the policy
- Clarification/expansion in Section 2 of Standards under ‘Doing Business with HCC.’
- Sue Flaig to clarify under Misuse of Positions the sentence omitted.
- Sue asked all to review sample policies and bring suggestions to next meeting regarding disclosure procedures.
- Determination of whether work-study students covered or not covered by policy.
- Sexual Harassment – Felix Haynes expressed importance in determining structure here. He felt that Deans in consultation with Human Resources should be involved in the enforcement process before District gets involved. This will need to be further refined.
- Carlton Williams asked if the workgroup would mind if he attempted to revise the section on Relatives. All concurred.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:
Sue thanked everyone for participating and expressed appreciation for assistance.

Felix Haynes mentioned the productivity since last meeting was very good.

Sue asked if the workgroup felt the Webinar shown at last meeting was helpful. Some workgroup members expressed that the Webinar narrowly focused on management and needed to be a bit more expansive, but that it was overall helpful.

The next meeting will be held at Brandon Campus, Thursday, February 28th, 3 p.m. The meeting room is to be confirmed.

Meeting adjourned.