

Guiding Principles of CAS Member Associations

Statement of Shared Ethical Principles for Student Services in Higher Education

For forty years, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) has served as a voice for quality assurance across student services in higher education. CAS was established to promote inter-association efforts to address issues of quality assurance, student learning, and professional integrity. It was believed that a single voice would have greater impact on the evaluation and improvement of services and programs than would many voices speaking for special interests by individual practitioners or by single-interest organizations.

Forty years later, CAS includes membership of 40 active professional associations and has developed standards in 51 functional areas. It has succeeded in providing a platform through which representatives from across the profession can come together to develop and promulgate standards of good practice that are endorsed not just by those working in a particular area, but by representatives of the entire profession.

CAS often cites George Washington, who said, "Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair." CAS has raised standards; it is now time to focus on the attributes, such as wisdom and honesty, of those professionals who would use the standards. Professionals working to provide services in higher education share more than a commitment to quality assurance and standards of practice. A review of the ethical statements of member associations demonstrates clearly that there are elements of ethical principles and values that are shared across the profession.

Most of the member associations represented in CAS are guided by ethical codes of professional practice enforced through the prescribed channels of its association. CAS acknowledges and respects the individual codes and standards of ethical conduct of its member associations. From these codes CAS has created a statement of shared ethical principles which focus on six basic principles that form the foundation for CAS member association codes: autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, justice, fidelity, veracity and affiliation. This statement is not intended to replace or supplant the code of ethics of any professional association; rather, it is intended to articulate those shared ethical principles that we hold in common across the profession. It is our hope that by articulating those beliefs that we share, we can help those across campus and beyond understand better who we are as a profession of those in service to students and higher education.

Principle I - Autonomy

We believe it is essential to demonstrate responsibility with freedom. Thus, we take responsibility for our actions and both support and empower an individual's freedom of choice.

- We strive for quality and excellence in the work that we do.
- We respect one's freedom of choice.
- We believe that individuals, ourselves and others, are responsible for their own behavior and learning.
- We promote change in individuals and in society through education.
- We foster an environment where people feel empowered to make decisions.
- We take responsibility for our actions and holding ourselves and other accountable.
- We study, discuss, investigate, teach, conduct research, and publish freely within the academic community.
- We engage in continuing education and professional development.

Principle II – Non-Maleficance

We pledge to do no harm.

- We collaborate with others for the good of those whom we serve.
- We interact in ways that promote positive outcomes.
- We create environments that are educational and supportive of the growth and development of the whole person.
- We exercise role responsibilities in a manner that respects the rights and property of others without exploiting or abusing power.

Principle III - Beneficence

We engage in altruistic attitudes and actions that promote goodness and contribute to the health and welfare of others.

- We treat others courteously.
- We consider the feelings of others.
- We work toward positive and beneficial outcomes.

Principle IV - Justice

We actively promote human dignity and endorse equality and fairness for everyone.

- We treat others with respect, fairness, preserving their dignity, honoring their differences, promoting their welfare.
- We eliminate barriers that impede student learning and development or discriminate against full participation by all students.
- We extend due process to all persons.
- We operate within the framework of laws and policies.
- We respect the rights of individuals and all constituent groups to express their opinions.
- We assess students in a valid, open, and fair manner and one consistent with course objectives.

Principle V - Fidelity

We are faithful to an obligation, trust, or duty.

- We maintain confidentiality of interactions, student records, and information related to legal and private matters.
- We avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof.
- We honor commitments made within the guidelines of established policies and procedures.
- We demonstrate loyalty, commitment, and good stewardship of resources to the institutions that employ us.

Principle VI - Veracity

We seek and convey the truth in our words and actions.

- We act with integrity and honesty in all endeavors and interactions.
- We relay information accurately.
- We communicate all relevant facts and information without violating confidentiality.

Principle VII – Affiliation

We actively promote connected relationships among all people, appreciate and celebrate our differences and commonalities and foster community.

- We create environments that promote mutual respect and appreciation of others.
- We model this through our own pursuit of self-awareness, diversity training and growth-fostering interactions.

- We promote relational authenticity, mutual empathy, and engagement within human interactions.
- We examine the influence of power on the experience of diversity to reduce marginalization and foster community.

When professionals act in accordance with ethical principles, program quality is enhanced and ultimately students are served. As professionals providing services in higher education, we are committed to upholding these shared ethical principles, for the benefit of our students, our profession, and higher education.

Respectfully submitted by the CAS Interprofessional Ethics Committee: Laura Dean, Luke Jensen, Becky Johnens (co-chair), John Lowery, Michelle Stefanisko (co-chair), September 2004.