

## **College of Social Science Community Code of Conduct February, 2020**

The mission of the College of Social Science is to become a global leader in top-tier research while advancing engaged learning and societal well-being. A positive climate that prioritizes mutual respect is essential to advancing this mission. We resolve to achieve our mission by embodying the values of the College and celebrating those who advance our collective integrity. Consistent with the Faculty Handbook statement on Tolerance and Civility ([https://hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/university-wide/tolerance\\_civility.html](https://hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/university-wide/tolerance_civility.html)), our intent is that this code enables civil conversation and especially protects vulnerable individuals when they express diverse opinions.

We all have a responsibility to foster and maintain respectful relationships with others and to promote an equitable and supportive workplace environment. Civility does not imply homogeneity or the absence of conflict; intellectual exchange (even heated intellectual exchange) is pivotal to our academic mission. That said, we need to engage in reasoned exchanges that are professional, respectful, and considerate of individuals and their differences. Civility is a hallmark of a healthy intellectual community; bullying has no place in one.

The College's strategic plan identifies six values which guide both how we carry out our day-to-day activities and our interactions with each other, within and outside the College. These values are below, with some examples of the types of behaviors to which we aspire. Note that these examples are not intended to be comprehensive, but simply some examples of the standards to which we hold ourselves.

### Quality:

- We value multiple perspectives and solicit diverse viewpoints because a healthy exchange of ideas is a pivotal part of the academic enterprise and increases the quality of our work. We are free to disagree with one another and engage in honest debate, but we do so in a manner that embodies comity.
- We lead and interact with positivity and sensitivity to power differentials; we use authority responsibly.

### Inclusiveness:

- We acknowledge power imbalances and take special care to ensure that the viewpoints of all stakeholders are considered.
- We treat each other with respect.
- We solicit and are receptive to diverse feedback from each other.

### Connectivity:

- We recognize that our words and actions have consequences for others. We act to advance, not degrade, each others' productivity, and dignity.
- We cultivate honesty, transparency, and open lines of communication.
- We work to constructively resolve conflict whenever possible, avoiding personal attacks.
- We extend civility to each other through all forms of communication, including email and social media.

### Integrity:

- We do not spread untruths or engage in ad hominem attacks.
- We give credit to those who deserve it.

Creativity:

- We ask creative and sometimes difficult questions to ensure we promote and defend academic freedom.
- We innovate to address challenges and overcome barriers.

Empowerment:

- We trust each other to lead and complete tasks.
- We are accountable to ourselves and to each other to maintain the values of the College.

This code will be in place for five years, then be re-evaluated by the College Faculty Advisory Council and the Dean's Office.

For these standards to be effective, we all need to provide voice. If you experience or observe behavior you believe to be inconsistent with these values, we encourage you to discuss it with the individual involved if appropriate, or bring it to any of the following individuals:

For faculty and academic staff (including specialists), the head of your academic unit, the Faculty Excellence Advocate of the College, the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, the University's Faculty Grievance Office, Academic Human Resources.

For graduate students, the Director of Graduate Studies or head of your academic unit, the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, the Dean of the Graduate School, the University Ombudsperson, your union representative if appropriate.

For staff, the business manager or head of your academic unit, the Dean's Chief of Staff, Human Resources, your union representative if appropriate.

For undergraduate students, the head of your academic unit, or the unit in which the individual is affiliated, the University Ombudsperson, the office of the Dean of Students, the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs.

Complaints involving violations of RVSM or ADP policies should be communicated directly to the Office of Institutional Equity. Retaliation for reporting violations of any policy or participating in any investigation is never acceptable at MSU.

When possible, reported violations should be addressed via restorative justice and alternative-dispute resolution methods. Repeated, persistent, and/or especially severe behaviors inconsistent with these values on the part of administrators, faculty, staff, or students could lead to disciplinary action. Links to the appropriate policies are below.

[https://www.hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/faculty-academic-staff/faculty-handbook/tenure\\_discipline\\_dismissal.html](https://www.hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/faculty-academic-staff/faculty-handbook/tenure_discipline_dismissal.html)

<https://reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.aspx?Section=112#s514>

<https://hr.msu.edu/ua/discipline/support-staff.html>

<https://www.deanofstudents.msu.edu/student-conduct-0>

## **College of Social Science Community Code of Conduct Process**

We began our process in Fall, 2018 with a discussion in our Chairs/Directors meeting about the importance of collegiality, the levels of collegiality that various units are facing (both high and low) and how centralized/decentralized they felt the process should be. The consensus of the group is that they would like to have a College-wide document that they could bring to the faculty/staff in their units for discussion. We then began the process of creating that document by identifying a subset of Chairs/Directors to form a writing group.

That group collected professionalism statements from a variety of professional associations represented in the College. We read them, and identified elements we felt should be included in a College statement. We also discussed extensively how to frame the document (linked to our values in the College's new strategic plan), the document's orientation (aspirational rather than prescriptive), how to ensure that the code of conduct would not be used to attack vulnerable individuals who happen to disagree with powerful ones (an explicit statement in the introduction and reference to power differentials throughout), and the consequences for behavior that violations of this code would entail (as a precursor for discipline).

We then circulated the document and received feedback from a variety of groups, revising the document in response to these comments periodically:

- College Chairs/Directors 9/26/2018
- College Faculty Advisory Committee 9/28/2018
- Dean's Group on Community Values 10/9/2018
- College Research Committee 10/19/2018
- Graduate Dean's Student Advisory Council 10/25/2018 (graduate students)
- HRLR Board members (who have expertise in these types of policies) 10/29/2018
- College Associate Chairs 10/30/2018
- Staff Advisory Committee 10/30/2018 (precursor to Dean's Advisory Committee for Support Staff)
- Dean's Advisory Board for Diversity and Inclusion 11/1/2018
- Graduate Program Directors 11/5/2018
- College Chairs/Directors 1/23/2019
- Dean Croson visits individual Departments/Schools 1/2019-4/2019 (many included departmental staff)
- College Chairs/Directors 8/21/2019
- College Faculty Advisory Committee 10/11/2019
- College Chairs/Directors 10/16/2019
- College Faculty Advisory Committee 11/18/2019 (vote 11 to 0, 1 abstention)
- College Faculty and Staff for "notice and comment" 1/6/2020-1/22/2020
- Chairs/Directors 2/19/2020 (unanimous)