Standard Nine — Institutional Integrity

I. Purpose/Description

Overview (9.A.1)

As an institution of higher education, we are committed to performing all of our mission-related roles with integrity and in accordance with high ethical standards. To this end, we are committed to maintaining high standards of fiscal integrity; to providing our employees with positive and productive work environments, including a strong emphasis on shared governance; and to creating learning environments for our students and faculty that promote the free exchange of ideas and respect for individual differences. Our mission and values statements and our policies make explicit our support for integrity and honesty.

For example, our university mission statement indicates that we welcome students "from all regions, nations, and cultures." One of our curricular and co-curricular student outcomes is the "development of character." Further, in a general statement of policy, we affirm that we are "committed to providing an environment free from harassment and other forms of discrimination ..." (weber.edu/generalinfo/WSUprofile.htm). Finally, our catalog states that expressions or actions that disparage others are contrary to our mission. There are many university policies, federal and state laws, and professional codes of ethics that guide the ethical behaviors of our faculty, staff, students, administrators, and board members.


University policies that describe our ethical standards are reviewed regularly, revised as needed, and disseminated widely through...
From campus-wide training sessions and via the internet. These policies include the following:

- Ethical standards and associated standards of behavior expected for faculty with our students, campus and professional colleagues, community, and institution are outlined in our policies 9.03 through 9.08 (documents.weber.edu/ppm/9-03.htm), and in our university and college rank and tenure criteria (documents.weber.edu/ppm/PPM8.htm)

- Our online faculty handbook includes a section on academic integrity, including academic dishonesty and plagiarism — faculty.weber.edu/handbook

- Principles of academic freedom for our faculty are outlined in policies which state that we will "provide and sustain an environment conducive to sharing, extending, and critically examining knowledge and values and to furthering the search for wisdom" (documents.weber.edu/ppm/9-01.htm); Table I on page 2 provides survey data from both our part-time and full-time faculty from the spring of 2003 that indicate our faculty believe we are upholding their rights to academic freedom.

- Our faculty and staff due process rights are outlined in policy to ensure that fair and reasonable judgments are made in situations that may yield a serious adverse decision about a faculty or staff member (documents.weber.edu/ppm/9-09.htm, documents.weber.edu/ppm/3-31.htm, documents.weber.edu/ppm/3-33.htm).

- Several policies define and describe how to manage conflict of interest for employees and our Board of Trustees members (documents.weber.edu/ppm/3-36.htm, documents.weber.edu/ppm/3-54.htm, documents.weber.edu/ppm/3-32a.htm, documents.weber.edu/ppm/3-36a.htm).

- Our student code is explicit about our goal to foster personal integrity and the ethical development of students documents.weber.edu/ppm/6-22.htm, and it

### Standard 9: Table I. Academic Freedom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percent Who Agree or Strongly Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full-time Faculty</strong> (285 respondents of 460 surveyed)</td>
<td><strong>Part-time Faculty</strong> (196 respondents of 400 surveyed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WSU accords me the right of full freedom in discussing my subject matter in my classes so that I may present any controversial material which is relevant to my courses.</td>
<td>87.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>WSU accords me the right of free inquiry and the unconstrained dissemination of ideas, including complete freedom in research, publication, or other artistic creation activities.</td>
<td>84.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>WSU accords me the right to be free from direct or indirect coercion, intimidation, or fear of reprisal because of new, bold, challenging, or unconventional ideas which I have researched, published, or taught.</td>
<td>75.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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provides students with due process rights during the investigation of complaints or charges.

- Our policy on affirmative action and nondiscrimination helps us develop selection and promotion standards based on nondiscriminatory criteria. Our hiring process is standardized, and each hiring decision is reviewed critically and independently by our Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Office prior to being approved.

Examples of practices that demonstrate our commitment to honesty and protection of human rights include the following:

- The Office of the Assistant to the President for Diversity is responsible for coordinating and promoting events that promote our ability to embrace and value the diversity of all peoples. The Assistant to the President for Diversity, assisted by an Administrative Standing Committee on Diversity, sponsors or promotes activities that impact hundreds of individuals both on and off-campus each year. For example, we host two annual events that focus on issues that may be challenging or controversial: Holocaust Commemoration and Diversity Conference. These conferences provide opportunities for our faculty, staff, and students, along with members of the broader off-campus community, to discuss and explore issues that relate to personal integrity and the development of character.

- Members of our Board of Trustees and members of our student government take an oath at the beginning of their terms to support, obey, and defend the Constitution of the United States and the State of Utah and to discharge the duties of their office with fidelity.

- Our information technology employees, employees with access to the alumni/development database, and all employees who are provided with access to our student information system sign agreements that require the signer to hold confidential the information to which they will have access. Employees are subject to disciplinary action if they violate this agreement.

- Employees in the Divisions of Administrative Services, University Relations, and Information Technology are periodically surveyed to explore issues of inclusivity, unity, and team-building within those divisions (see University Relations data at univrelations.weber.edu/training/DAT_survey_results_apr03.htm).

- We have ongoing training for all management and supervisory personnel to ensure knowledge of and compliance with effective internal financial control procedures and practices.

State and Federal Laws and Regulations (9.A.1)

- All of our employees are bound by the Utah Public Officers and Employees Ethics Act which addresses several important aspects of employment, including disclosing or using private information, using one’s position to secure privileges, and when it is prohibited to accept a gift or require or offer a donation.

- The Records Office maintains student records in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA affords students the right to inspect and review their educational records, the right to seek to have the records amended, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of information from their records (documents.weber.edu/records).

- We have a government records officer who processes requests for information that are accessible through the Government Records Access and Management Act (GRAMA).

- Two oversight committees are in place to ensure that we comply with federal regulations that protect the rights of individuals.
or selected categories of animals that are the focus of WSU-sponsored research: the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects and the Animal Care and Use Committee. Both of these committees are chaired by faculty and have substantial faculty involvement with their decisions.

• Discrimination and harassment are prohibited by Titles IV, VI, and VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. They are also prohibited by the Utah Anti-Discrimination Act. Our discrimination and harassment policies (PPM 3-32 Discrimination and Harassment and PPM 3-32a Consensual Relations) provide guidance on how we create working and teaching and learning environments free from harassment and illegal forms of discrimination, specify when amorous relationships between our employees and either other employees or students over whom the employee exercises supervisory or evaluative authority are considered unwise because of the power imbalance in the relationship, and identify possible consequences for violating these policies.

• Recent federal legislation, including the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, has impacted how we provide privacy for important financial and personal information. As a result of these acts, we are examining our business, education, and student service practices to identify improvements needed in our employee training program and in other institutional procedures. Legislative compliance will be an area of ongoing focus and effort for us.

Professional Standards and Codes of Ethics (9.A.1)

Many of our staff, faculty, and students are members of organizations or professions with formal standards and/or codes of ethics that set minimum expectations for integrity, including, but not limited to, the following:

• American College Health Association
• American College Personnel Association
• American Institute of Certified Public Accountants
• American Psychological Association
• Association of College and University Auditors
• Association of Institutional Researchers
• Council for Advancement and Support of Education
• Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education
• Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct
• Institute of Internal Auditors
• Institute of Supply Management
• International Association of Chiefs of Police
• National Association of College and University Business Officers
• National Association of Educational Buyers
• National Association of Emergency Medical Services Educators
• National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
• National Society of Fund-Raising Executives
• National Council on Planned Giving
• American Nursing Association
• Public Relations Society of America
• Society for Human Resource Management

Institutional Representation (9.A.3)

We annually review and update important university publications (e.g., catalog and view book) for accuracy. We have multiple levels of review in place to ensure that these publications are accurate. We also have policies in place that indicate that our faculty should avoid creating the impression in their public appearances or statements that they are officially representing the university, unless they are authorized to do so (documents.weber.edu/ppm/9-07.htm).

We strive to represent WSU consistently through the use of common marks of identity and a common tag line. In 1997, our university mark was included in American Corporate Identity, The 18th Annual Showing of the Best
New Work in the USA, David E. Carter. The 
Guide to Weber State University Graphic 
Standards and Printing Services (departments.weber.edu/styleguide/01.asp) provides 
guidelines for using identity marks. Figures of 
Speech (departments.weber.edu/publicrelations/style.htm) is a university style manual 
that helps us create consistent, clear publica-
tions. Our tag line, "Changing Minds" is 
included in recruitment publications and pro-
motional materials.

The Office of University Communications was 
reorganized in 2001 to consolidate responsibili-
ties across the Division of University 
Relations. The purpose was to enhance our 
ability to integrate communications, and it 
resulted in greater service to the university 
community to ensure the accuracy and consist-
cy of its print and electronic media.

In fall 2002, we unveiled a redesigned website 
with new architecture and navigation to pro-
vide better access for external audiences, par-
ticularly prospective students. In 2003, we 
launched web portals for alumni, faculty and 
staff, and students that allow these audiences 
to personalize how they interact with WSU 
and how they use the information we provide.

We are in compliance with NWCCU Policy 
9.1 – Institutional Integrity.

II. Significant Changes Since 
1994

We have always had a focus on maintaining 
high standards of integrity in our faculty and 
staff and on the development of character in 
our students. A significant change since 1994 
has been the increase in the number of federal 
and state statutes and regulations that focus 
on issues of privacy and honesty and require 
us to design and implement compliance proce-
dures, including the creation or revision of 
policies, delegation of authority, and the design 
and implementation of faculty and staff training 
programs.

Non-governmental policies and guidelines also 
impact us. In response to an NCAA inquiry in 
1995, we implemented a strong athletic com-
pliance program to ensure that we adhere to 
all applicable rules and regulations of the 
NCAA and Big Sky Conference. Two profes-
sional level positions were authorized and four 
positions were modified to include specific 
compliance responsibilities. A compliance com-
mittee was formed and meets regularly to 
address policy issues. The associate commis-
sioner of the Big Sky 
Conference is an ex offi-
cio member of the com-
mittee. Annual program 
audits are conducted by 
the university internal 
auditor. Additionally, we 
had an outside consult-
ant review the program. Through these efforts, 
we received unqualified certification from the 
NCAA.

In 2003, the Utah Board of Regents revised 
policy R565 on audit committees to require 
institutions to create a separate Board of 
Trustee audit review committee. This commit-
tee has several responsibilities, including:

- Approve our annual audit schedule with 
  the advice of the president
- Review and close all internal audits, review 
  all regent-required audits, review primary 
  external audits, and interact with external 
  auditors
- Assess our internal control environment
- Assess our process for receiving anonymous 
  complaints
- Assess our compliance with applicable laws
- Report to the regents annually and report 
  to the trustees quarterly

In the fall of 2003, we began a campus-wide 
training program for all management and
supervisory personnel to ensure knowledge of and compliance with effective internal financial control procedures and practices. In addition, our internal audit department provides training on internal controls at the beginning of each audit and in our supervisor training courses.

III. Strengths and Challenges

Strengths include:

- Institutional focus on issues of integrity
- Respect for and tradition of shared governance
- Fiscal integrity
- Promotion of diversity and inclusivity

Challenges include:

- State and federal legislation, non-governmental regulations, and related compliance requirements
- Information technology issues

IV. Next Steps/ Action Items

- Formalize our compliance and enhance our training management efforts to more effectively meet statutory and non-statutory requirements and minimize our institutional risk profile
- Implement effective information technology identity management policies and procedures