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"He who exercises government by means of his integrity may be compared to the north polar star, which keeps its place and all the stars turn toward it."

— Confucius

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Weber State University Catalog ([weber.edu/generalinfo/WSUprofile.htm](http://weber.edu/generalinfo/WSUprofile.htm)).  
Weber State University Policies and Procedures Manual  
([documents.weber.edu/ppm/](http://documents.weber.edu/ppm/))

## 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](http://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 and Practices (9.A.2, 9.A.4, 9.A.5)

University policies that describe our ethical standards are reviewed regularly, revised as needed, and disseminated widely through

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](http://documents.weber.edu/ppm/9-03.htm)), and in our university and college rank and tenure criteria ([documents.weber.edu/ppm/PPM8.htm](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://documents.weber.edu/ppm/9-09.htm), [documents.weber.edu/ppm/3-31.htm](http://documents.weber.edu/ppm/3-31.htm), [documents.weber.edu/ppm/3-33.htm](http://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](http://documents.weber.edu/ppm/3-36.htm), [documents.weber.edu/ppm/3-54.htm](http://documents.weber.edu/ppm/3-54.htm), [documents.weber.edu/ppm/3-32a.htm](http://documents.weber.edu/ppm/3-32a.htm), [documents.weber.edu/ppm/3-36a.htm](http://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](http://documents.weber.edu/ppm/6-22.htm), and it

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

Statement	Percent Who Agree or Strongly Agree	
	Full-time Faculty (285 respondents of 460 surveyed)	Part-time Faculty (196 respondents of 400 surveyed)
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.	87.1%	81.2%
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.	84.0%	77.4%
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.	75.2%	71.9%

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](http://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](http://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](https://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](http://departments.weber.edu/styleguide/01.asp)) provides guidelines for using identity marks. *Figures of Speech* ([departments.weber.edu/publicrelations/style.htm](http://departments.weber.edu/publicrelations/style.htm)) is a university style manual that helps us create consistent, clear publications. Our tag line, "Changing Minds" is included in recruitment publications and promotional materials.

The Office of University Communications was reorganized in 2001 to consolidate responsibilities 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

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"The soul takes nothing with her to the other world but her education and culture." — Plato

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community to ensure the accuracy and consistency of its print and electronic media.

In fall 2002, we unveiled a redesigned website with new architecture and navigation to provide better access for external audiences, particularly 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

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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 procedures, 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 compliance program to ensure that we adhere to all applicable rules and regulations of the NCAA and Big Sky Conference. Two professional level positions were authorized and four positions were modified to include specific compliance responsibilities. A compliance committee was formed and meets regularly to address policy issues.

The associate commissioner of the Big Sky Conference is an ex officio member of the committee. Annual program audits are conducted by the university internal auditor. Additionally, we had an outside consultant

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 committee 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