

CODE OF ETHICS

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

This policy pertains to employees.

At Fox Valley Technical College, we are committed to conducting our business with the highest standards of integrity, professionalism, and respect for all individuals. This Code of Ethics serves as a cornerstone of our college culture and outlines the values, principles, and behaviors we expect from our employees.

Our goal is to foster an environment of trust and accountability, where ethical decision-making is not only encouraged but expected in every aspect of our operations.

Ethical obligations involving financial interests, outside employment, acceptance of gifts, use of College resources, and confidential information are governed by the College's Conflict of Interest Policy and applicable law.

Unacceptable Employment Relationships

Consensual Relationships Between Employees

Relationships between and among employees that foster team cohesion and contribute to a positive working environment are encouraged. However, consensual relationships of a romantic or sexual nature between a supervising employee and a subordinate employee have the potential for being exploitive in nature because of the power differential between the two individuals, may adversely affect the working environment, and may present a real or perceived conflict of interest for the individuals involved.

An employee who is involved in a romantic or sexual relationship with another employee should not work for, supervise that employee, or serve in any situation where one employee would be responsible for auditing, controlling, or providing oversight of the work of the other employee, or where any potential for fraud or conflict of interest exists. Employees shall not participate either formally or informally in any employment decision or actions relating to any individual with whom a romantic or sexual relationship exists.

When such a situation exists or arises, it is the responsibility of the individuals involved to disclose the nature of the relationship to the Director of Talent and Culture or their designee. A determination about what measures are appropriate will be made on a case-by-case basis from the facts of the situation. Confidentiality will be respected to the extent possible. The Director of Talent and Culture or their designee will:

- Determine to the extent possible whether the reported romantic or sexual relationship is consensual and determine whether a conflict of interest exists.
- Review any employment decision made by the supervising employee relating to the subordinate employee before such decisions become final.
- Explore and assist with options that may include the transfer of responsibility for supervising the subordinate employee or other alternative arrangements.

- Follow up to ensure that appropriate options and/or transfer of responsibility occurs.

It is the responsibility of the employees involved to conform to the alternative arrangements, to report any issues that arise to the Director of Talent and Culture or their designee and to follow College policies.

Employment Relationships Between Family Members

An employee who is a family member of another employee should not work for, supervise, or serve in any situation where one employee would be responsible for auditing, controlling, or providing oversight of the work of the other employee or where any potential for fraud or conflict of interest exists. Employees shall not participate either formally or informally in any employment decision or actions relating to a family member.

When such a situation exists or arises, it is the responsibility of the individuals concerned to disclose the nature of the relationship to their supervisor or the Director of Talent and Culture or their designee. While relatives of currently employed workers can be considered as applicants for an open position, the hiring of a relative may not result in a direct supervisory or managerial relationship or one which would create a potential conflict of interest. This policy applies to hiring and employment decisions affecting all job classifications, including full and part time faculty, managers, union and non-union support staff, adjunct faculty, student employees, and seasonal positions as well as use of independent contractors.

All questions and issues relating to an employment-of-relatives situation or concern should be addressed to the Director of Talent and Culture or their designee. Employees who become subject to this policy's provisions due to marriage or commencement of a close personal relationship must inform their supervisor or the Director of Talent and Culture or their designee as soon as practical. The Director of Talent and Culture or their designee will determine on a case-by-case basis what, if any, action should be taken.

It is the responsibility of the employees involved to conform to the alternative arrangements, to report any issues that arise to the Director of Talent and Culture or their designee and to follow College policies.

Consensual Relationships between Employees and Students

1. Positive professional relationships between faculty, staff, and students are encouraged. However, personal relationships, especially those of a romantic or sexual nature, between employees and students have the potential for being exploitive in nature because of the power differential between the two individuals, may adversely affect the learning environment, and may present a real or perceived conflict of interest for the individuals involved. Staff includes all student employees. All college employees are strongly discouraged from initiating or pursuing a romantic or sexual relationship with any current student, regardless of whether the student is under the employee's direct instruction, supervision, or authority.
2. No faculty member may initiate or engage in a romantic or sexual relationship with any student who is currently enrolled in their class or who is currently receiving

professional/academic guidance from them. This includes all active students of the faculty member.

3. Faculty members are strongly discouraged from developing relationships of a romantic or sexual nature with a student who is actively enrolled in the program in which they primarily teach. All employees are required to disclose any existing romantic or sexual relationships with a current student to the Director of Talent and Culture or their designee as soon as the relationship exists or the individual becomes a student.
4. If a faculty member has a pre-existing romantic or sexual relationship with a person who subsequently enrolls in the program in which the faculty member teaches, the faculty member must immediately inform their Dean. Insofar as possible, the student's schedule should be arranged to avoid having the student in a class taught by the faculty member. If it cannot be avoided, the Dean, working with the Director of Talent and Culture or their designee, will review academic decisions made by the faculty member with respect to that student before they become final. No employee may initiate or agree to a romantic or sexual relationship with any student that involves a real or perceived conflict of interest. This includes, but is not limited to situations involving grading, advising, supervision, employment, financial aid, discipline, or access to confidential information.
5. If an employee has a pre-existing romantic or sexual relationship with a person who subsequently enrolls as a student, and the employee works in an area in which a potential conflict of interest exists, the employee must inform his or her supervisor. The supervisor, working with the Director of Talent and Culture or their designee, will determine on a case-by-case basis what, if any, action should be taken. Confidentiality will be respected to the extent possible. The College trusts and expects its employees to use good ethical judgment and discretion in off-campus interactions with students, appropriate to the professional responsibilities of an employee's position. Faculty members are strongly discouraged from linking with students through personal social media accounts. Employees and students involved in disclosed relationships must comply with any alternative arrangements implemented by the College and promptly report concerns or issues that arise. Disclosure under this policy does not replace any mandatory reporting obligations an employee may have under the College's Title IX or related policies.

Family Members in Class

Having a family member in class taught by a faculty member has the potential of a real or perceived conflict of interest.

Faculty members are strongly discouraged from having a family member in classes they teach. The College will attempt to adjust the instructor of the class if they are able to.

In some rare cases having a faculty member teach a class that includes a family member may be unavoidable. If it cannot be avoided, the faculty member must inform the appropriate Dean, who, in consultation with the Director of Talent and Culture, will determine on a case-by-case basis what, if any, action should be taken, which may include a review of academic decisions made by the faculty member with respect to that student before they become final.

It is the responsibility of the employee and student involved to conform to the alternative arrangements that may occur, to report any issues that arise to the appropriate dean and to follow College policies.

Family Members Defined

For purposes of this policy, family is defined as any family member by blood or marriage up to and including the level of first cousin, corresponding “step” relationships or any individual with whom an employee has a close personal relationship such as domestic partner, co-habitant, significant other, or any other person residing in an employee’s household.

Miscellaneous Provisions

It is considered a violation of this policy for an employee to fail to sustain an atmosphere in which controversial issues or different philosophical stances can be presented fairly and in which the dignity of everyone is maintained.

Employees shall not, in their capacity as employees, make or cause to be made an entry in an account, record, application, certificate, report, or statement, that materially and intentionally falsifies, manipulates, or misrepresents College data for personal reasons or for the benefit of themselves, a family member or business associate.

As part of each employee’s on-going obligation for the stewardship of the public’s trust, employees shall not use College time, facilities, or equipment for any purpose not directly connected with the employee’s job responsibilities. Use of time, facilities, or equipment for personal purposes, service (such as volunteerism) or any other purpose requires prior approval from the employee’s immediate supervisor or as otherwise set forth in administrative policies.

Application and Interpretation of Policy

If, in the discharge of his/her official duties, an employee is required to take an action that is, or may be prohibited by the policy, the employee will:

1. Refrain from taking this action.
2. Develop and deliver a written statement to the Vice President of Administration or their designee describing the matter requiring action or decision, and the nature of the possible conflict of interest.
3. Upon receipt of such a statement, the Vice President of Administration or their designee will:
4. Determine that the activity in question is not prohibited and serves the best interest of the College.
5. Relieve the employee from responsibility for the assignment, and if appropriate, assign the matter to another staff member for whom the matter does not create a conflict, or
6. Take other appropriate action.

Violations

In the event any employee violates this policy, the employee's supervisor and/or the President may consider all appropriate discipline including discharge.

- Prevailing policies and procedures related to discipline will be followed.

Those employees whose conduct is governed by the State of Wisconsin Ethics Board in addition to action by the College Board of Trustees, could be sanctioned by the State of Wisconsin Government Accountability Board.

Adopted: 02/13/1984

Reviewed: 05/19/2026

Revised: 06/15/2026