5.0 Professional Ethics

The members of Reinhardt College’s faculty, administration, and staff are expected to maintain the highest level of ethics to reflect favorably upon their profession, their status as role models for students, and their position as representatives of the College and its mission. Ethical standards are especially crucial if the various members of the Reinhardt community are to continue to enjoy the mutual respect and collegiality that have traditionally characterized this institution. In particular, it is important for the faculty, the administration, and the staff to establish warm, mentoring relationships with students, yet to maintain a professional level of discretion regarding the release of sensitive, private information about other students, administrators, faculty members, staff members, or the internal workings of the College. With regard to issues of sexual harassment, faculty, administrative, and staff members should be especially aware of their positions of relative power in relation to students and subordinate employees. Faculty, administrative, and staff members are ethically obligated to model principles of academic and personal integrity. In the classroom, faculty members are to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects their professional status, respects the students they teach, and creates an environment of mutual respect and tolerance that allows for discussion of conflicting ideas, beliefs, and opinions without fear or distrust.

5.2 As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Professors make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student’s true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from them. They protect their students’ academic freedom.

8.1.2 Should the College seek to terminate a tenured or non tenured faculty member, the following conditions shall apply: After consultation with the appropriate School Dean and Program Coordinator, the VPAA may seek approval from the President to terminate a faculty member for any of the following reasons:

(a) Persistent and documented incidents of academic inefficiency, incompetence, or neglect of faculty responsibilities. This documentation must include evidence of administrative efforts, including personal consultations and formal written warnings to address the situation.

(b) Documented evidence of academic dishonesty.

(c) Documented evidence of flagrant violations of campus policies, procedures, or collegial standards of behavior.

(d) Conviction of a felony.

(e) Sexual harassment.

(f) Documented evidence of a mental or physical disability that seriously impairs teaching ability.

(g) Termination of a program of study that warrants faculty reduction but only after a lengthy public review involving all levels of the College, the Faculty Senate, and the Board of Trustees.

(h) Financial exigency that requires downsizing the entire instructional staff but only after a lengthy public review involving faculty members, administrators, and trustees. (See V.8.4)
College grievance procedures for faculty members do not apply to complaints of sexual harassment, which are resolved through the College’s Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure. (See V.10). College grievance procedures for faculty members also do not apply to matters related to faculty dismissal, non-reappointment, non-renewal of a three-year appointment, or denial of tenure or promotion. These matters must be referred to the Faculty Appeals Committee. (See V.8.3).

9.3.10 The chair may allow informal exchanges and comments between parties or among College Grievance Committee members and participants. The chair may require that the hearing be conducted more formally when he or she believes that this approach will be more conducive to an orderly hearing. Neither party shall be allowed to interfere with the presentation of the other’s case. Personal abuse, harassment or obscene language is to be considered out of order.

10.0 Harassment Policy The sensitivity of the issue of harassment and the very real legal ramifications emanating from charges of harassment make it imperative that an institution of higher education address the problem thoroughly for both employees and students. Legal bases for claims of harassment may be made under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments; and Executive Order 11426. An offender is subject to criminal liability for assault and battery and civil actions for tortuous interference with an employment contract, intentional infliction of emotional harm, breach of contract, or interference with the performance and progress of students. Harassment will not be tolerated by the College and may be grounds for immediate suspension, dismissal, or other appropriate action.

Upon receipt of a Faculty Appeals Committee report that material failures, inaccuracies or procedural irregularities may have interfered with a promotion or tenure decision, the VPAA will recommend to the President the actions necessary to reconsider the candidate’s application for promotion. The President will then communicate his or her decision regarding appropriate action to be taken to the VPAA and the candidate. For further information on Faculty and Staff Appeals and the College Harassment policy consult the Faculty Handbook, Section V.