Teaching the Aspen Way: Professional Ethics for Aspen Faculty

Ethical standards for university faculty are crucial to maintaining the integrity of higher education and ensuring a fair and respectful learning environment for students. High-quality online higher education faculty possess a combination of skills, characteristics, and practices essential for facilitating effective and engaging online learning experiences. There are several common ethical standards that university faculty are expected to uphold.

Faculty will familiarize themselves with Aspen's policies and codes of conduct and strive to uphold the highest ethical standards in their teaching and professional activities.

Academic and Intellectual Integrity (FLO: IE, CD)

- Promote and enforce academic honesty by discouraging plagiarism, cheating, and any form of academic misconduct.
- Provide clear guidelines on proper citation and referencing.
- Respect intellectual property rights, including copyrights, and properly attribute authorization to distributed materials.

Fair and Impartial Grading (FLO: IE, QF, AE)

- Assess student work objectively using course rubrics without bias or favoritism.
- Grading criteria will be transparent, and feedback will be constructive and timely.
- Regularly monitor student assignment submissions, student inquiries, and student discussions in their courses.
- Deliver scholarly feedback.

Respect for Diversity, Free Speech, and Academic Freedom (FLO: QF, CD, AE)

- Respect and value the diversity of their students, including differences in race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and socioeconomic background.
- Create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.
- Maintain an environment where diverse viewpoints can be expressed and discussed respectfully without ridicule.

Professional Engagement (FLO: R, AE, CD)

- Maintain high professionalism in their interactions with students, colleagues, and staff including being punctual, approachable, and responsive to student inquiries.
- Consistently share valuable contributions in all relevant course interactions, aiming to enhance the students' academic journey.

Clear and Professional Communication (FLO: IE, R)

- Provide clear and accurate information about course expectations, syllabi, assignments, and grading policies.
- Maintain regular and substantive interaction with students, using a scholarly tone in a way that is respectful, trustworthy, and supports professional relationships.

- Promptly address any student queries, or other requests initiated by students.
- Exhibit professional behavior through leadership, advocacy, cultural competence, and ethical conduct.

Accessible Instruction (FLO: IE, AE, QF)

- Accept accommodations for students with disabilities and ensure that course materials and activities are accessible to all students.
- Direct student inquiries regarding accessibility to academic advisors
- Adjust to varying teaching approaches and technologies to cater to the diverse requirements of online students.

Professional Development (FLO: AE)

- Engage in continuous professional development to stay current in their field and improve their teaching methods.
- Demonstrate proficiency and a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter being taught, as this expertise is essential for delivering precise information to students.
- Use evidence-based practices and leverage technology to produce high-value instruction.

Conflict Resolution and Avoiding Conflicts of Interest (FLO: IE, CD, QF)

- Avoid situations where their personal interests could conflict with their professional responsibilities.
- Address and resolve conflicts with students, colleagues, or administrators fairly and respectfully.

Safety, Welfare, and Confidentiality (FLO: CD, AE)

- FERPA Statement- Adhere to federal regulations for the protection of students' educational records by verifying each student's identity before discussing grades, assignment feedback, etc. Only communicate with students via authorized methods: email via the student's email address on file or Bongo.
- Prioritize the safety and well-being of their students, including taking appropriate action in cases of harassment, discrimination, or student distress.
- Respect the privacy of their students and keep confidential any sensitive information shared by students during their academic work.

Technological Equity and Citizenship (FLO: CD)

- Demonstrate digital citizenship by thoughtfully assessing online content, participating in respectful online discussions, and employing digital resources.
- Demonstrate a strong understanding of the online learning platform, tools, and technology required for effective online teaching, including video conferencing, learning management systems, and collaboration software.