

El Centro College

Office of the Ombudsman

TO: All ECC Students and Faculty

FROM: Dr. Bettie Tully, Ombudsperson
Fela Alfaro, Executive Dean of Student and Enrollment Services

DATE: 2010-2011 Academic Year

SUBJECT: El Centro College Discipline and Grievance Information for Students

We have every expectation that a student who enrolls in El Centro will behave in the same considerate manner as any competent, responsible adult member of the community. We also assume that all of our students are aware of and will abide by the principles of mutual respect and good taste. In the interest of fairness and order, the DCCCD has developed an official Code of Student Conduct that is published annually in the El Centro College Catalog. The following information is intended to clarify and explain procedures that are in place at El Centro College for assuring compliance with the DCCCD Code, as well as providing students with information about pursuing any kind of grievance against the college.

□ **What obligation do students assume when they enroll in a course?**

Each student agrees to fulfill the requirements of the course to the best of her/his ability, to read and to understand the course syllabus, and to follow classroom protocol as defined by the college and the instructor. Every teacher is an “officer of the college” in the classroom. Just as she/he has full authority to determine methodology, grading systems, content, etc., she/he also has full authority to set any reasonable, fair behavior standards for students in her/his classes. If a student fails to abide by these standards, then she/he may legitimately be asked to leave the class until a teacher conference has been arranged. The student is expected to comply by going to the division office and scheduling an appointment as soon as possible.

If a student has serious objections to a teacher’s classroom requirements, then she/he may informally appeal to the Division Dean, consult with the Ombudsperson for informal assistance or initiate the formal student grievance process.

□ **What happens if a student is disruptive?**

If a student engages in any minor disruptive, disrespectful, or otherwise inappropriate behavior, the teacher may warn the student, and if the behavior continues, ask the student to leave and arrange a teacher conference through the division office. If the conference is not productive, then a complaint may be filed with the Executive Dean of Student and Enrollment Services, or the teacher may request assistance from the Ombudsperson who will work informally with the student. Remember, that if disciplinary action is taken by the Executive Dean of Student and Enrollment Services, it must be based on written testimony by the complainant (teacher), so a written statement will be in the student’s file before any final sanction is imposed. The teacher’s written statement should be concise, but explicit when describing student’s behavior.

□ **What happens if a student engages in threatening behavior?**

In case of seriously disruptive or threatening behavior (to self or others) the President or Executive Dean of Student and Enrollment Services can impose an immediate interim suspension until the complaint is investigated. In such instances, the Executive Dean of Student and Enrollment Services and/or Campus Safety Office will be notified by the teacher as soon as possible. Written statements can be provided at a later time.

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□ **How will a student be disciplined for cheating?**

If any violation of academic standards occurs, such as plagiarism, cheating, collusion, etc., the teacher will decide if the violation warrants in-class action (F grades, make-up work, teacher conference, etc.) and if so, take the action. If the violation is serious enough to warrant suspension from a class, program or the college, then a complaint will be filed by the teacher with the Executive Dean of Student and Enrollment Services. This complaint will be jointly filed and the penalty jointly recommended by the instructor and the Division Dean. The complaint should be clearly stated and contain specific dates, times, persons involved, witnesses and other evidence that supports the complaint. The Executive Dean of Student and Enrollment Services will review the complaint and supporting evidence, confer with the College Vice President and based on Student Code requirements, either proceed with charges against the student, or in conference with complainants, decide to pursue other alternatives.

□ **What should students and faculty do if they perceive themselves to be victims of sexual or racial harassment?**

In the case of sexual or racial harassment, students should contact Dr. Bettie Tully, College Ombudsperson, or the Executive Dean of Student and Enrollment Services, immediately. The student will be confidentially counseled and informed about DCCCD policy, and will receive immediate assistance with solutions, both formal and informal. Faculty should immediately report any sexual or racial harassment by a student to the Executive Dean of Student and Enrollment Services.

□ **How can a student get help with problems without filing a formal complaint or grievance?**

There are frequently circumstances that allow for informal resolution of student problems. Please feel free to call on Dr. Bettie Tully (214-860-2105), Mr. Jim Handy (214-860-2073), or the division counselor, who will help any student to learn appropriate behaviors and coping skills, or otherwise improve classroom relationships. Please see the attached description of our ombudsman service.

□ **What are the penalties for violating DCCCD and El Centro College rules of conduct?**

If a student is placed on Disciplinary Probation, she/he is warned that any additional offense will likely result in suspension from the college. While on probation, the student must maintain weekly contact with an assigned counselor.

If a student is suspended (from the college), she/he will not be allowed on campus for any reason until the suspension period is over.

If a student is suspended from a program or class, she/he is not allowed to continue in said program.

If a student is expelled, she/he is banned indefinitely from enrolling at any DCCCD college.

See the Student Code of Conduct in the College Catalog for details.

□ **How can a student appeal disciplinary sanctions or course grades?**

The student appeal process for disciplinary action is described in detail in the DCCCD Code of Student Conduct. See the Ombudsperson, Dr. Bettie Tully, for assistance.

To appeal a grade received in a course, the instructor who assigned the grade is the first line of appeal. This appeal may be made verbally and informally. The division dean is the next line of appeal and this, too, may occur informally. If a student appeals to the next level, i.e., (the College Vice President), then the appeal must be in writing. Dr. Tully is available to assist students with this process.