

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Regulation



1.019 University Code of Conduct.

As members of the Florida A&M University (University) community, all faculty, staff, students, members of the Board of Trustees, University officers and affiliates are responsible for sustaining the highest ethical standards of professional conduct and integrity for this institution, and for the broader community in which we function. We share responsibility for this institution and for its enterprises. The University's Strategic Plan outlines the core values we hold as essential to responsible professional behavior, which include: integrity, accountability, innovation, and inclusion. The ethical principles espoused by the Florida Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees in Chapter 112, Part III of the Florida Statutes (Code of Ethics), reinforce our commitment to the University's values. Adherence by trustees, officers, faculty, staff, student employees, contractors and others acting on behalf of the University, to the standards set forth in this Code of Conduct is an integral part of the University's goal of attracting quality students, faculty, and staff, while ensuring a safe and healthy environment for all members of the campus community. Further, the University supports and encourages a full and open discourse and the robust exchange of ideas and perspectives. While the University upholds these freedoms, the University will not permit speech, expression, or assembly that advocates lawlessness and/or violence, or restrains, disrupts, or interferes with activities of members of the University community, whether by physical force or intimidation. The Code of Conduct outlines behavioral standards for members of the University community and for those acting on behalf of the University.

- (1) *Applicability.* This Code of Conduct applies to the following members of the University community: a) faculty, staff, and students who are paid for working for the University; b) Board of Trustees; c) consultants, vendors and contractors and other individuals using University resources or facilities, or receiving funds administered by the University; and d) individuals who perform services for the University as volunteers and who assert an association with the University. Any reference to members of the University community as provided in this regulation shall refer to the above referenced persons.
- (2) *Compliance with Laws and University Rules and Policies.* Per Section 1012.80, Florida Statutes, members of the University community shall comply with the applicable standards, policies, rules, regulations and state and federal laws that govern and guide their work. The University promotes ongoing and open communication at all levels of the institution. As such, administrators, supervisors and managers are responsible for supporting and monitoring compliance. Members of the University community have an obligation to report any behavior that they believe is unethical or in violation of state or federal law, regulations, or university policies. See Section 17 of this Regulation for reporting options.
- (3) *Disruptive Conduct.* The University strives to maintain an environment in which members of the University community treat each other with dignity and respect. University Regulation 10.111 prohibits individuals from acting intentionally to impair, interfere with, or obstruct the orderly conduct, processes and functions of the University. This includes substantially disrupting a student's, employee's, or the University's performance, opportunities or benefits.
- (4) *Conflicts of Interest and Commitment.* Faculty and staff of the University owe their primary professional allegiance to the University and its mission. The University has an obligation to internal and external stakeholders to use their

resources responsibly and, where required, for designated purposes. Thus, all officers, faculty, principal investigators, staff, student employees and others acting on behalf of the University hold positions of trust, and the University expects them to carry out their responsibilities with the highest level of integrity and ethical behavior. Outside activities are defined as any employment or activities entered into in addition to an individual's employment at the University, that utilize the knowledge, skills, abilities or expertise the individual uses to carry out their University duties. Outside activities, including any interest, obligation, or relationship that could potentially be, or appear to be, in conflict with the interests of the University, including those of immediate family members, must be disclosed to the University immediately so it can be managed appropriately. Conflicts of interest can often be managed to eliminate the risk of damage to the University, but only if they are promptly disclosed.

Failure to disclose outside activities related to an actual, apparent, or possible conflict of interest or commitment is a violation of this Regulation, as well as other applicable conflict of interest policies (including University Regulations 6.002 and 10.122) and the Florida Code of Ethics.

(5) Political Activities. Employees with intentions to seek election to and hold public office must notify the President or President's designee of such intentions. The President or President's designee will determine whether the employee's candidacy for holding public office will interfere with the full and faithful discharge of the employee's duties, as outlined in the University Regulation 10.123 and Section 104.31, Florida Statutes.

(6) External Communication on Behalf of the University. Pursuant to the University Communications Policy, the Office of Communications is the official University representative to the media and is tasked with establishing and cultivating relationships with journalists, publications and broadcast networks/channels, as well as responding to media inquiries, issuing official statements and announcements and providing guidance and leadership to the University

community about relevant media guidelines and best practices.

All University leaders, faculty, staff, partners, vendors and contractors must coordinate with the Office of Communications to develop and distribute news and information about the University and to participate in solicited and unsolicited media interviews or media events. Use of University logos and identity must be used in accordance with the University Style Guide and other applicable policies.

(7) Contract Authority. The acceptance of an agreement, including sponsored project funding, may create a legal obligation on the part of the University to comply with the terms and conditions of the agreement and applicable laws and regulations. Therefore, only individuals who have authority delegated by an appropriate University official are authorized to enter into agreements on behalf of the University. All agreements, understandings, and contracts must be reviewed by the Office of General Counsel before execution.

(8) Confidentiality and Privacy. The University community shall use confidential information acquired in the course of University business only for official or legal purposes, and not for personal or illegal advantage, during or after such affiliation. It is imperative that each community member complies with all state and federal laws, agreements with third parties, and University policies, regulations and procedures pertaining to the use, protection and disclosure of such information. Such policies apply even after the business relationship with the University ends.

(9) Gifts and Entertainment. Employees must abide by expectations outlined in University regulation, policy, and the Florida Code of Ethics regarding the solicitation or acceptance of anything of value from third parties. Members of the University community are prohibited from soliciting or accepting anything of value based on the understanding that their official position will be

influenced by such a gift. Employees identified as a financial disclosure reporting individual or procurement employee have additional restrictions from donors who are lobbyists, principals, political action committees or vendors doing business with the university.

- (10) *Record Keeping.* Employees are expected to demonstrate a commitment to transparency in the retention and management of records that have sufficient administrative, legal, fiscal, or historical value pursuant to University policy, the Public Records Law (Chapter 119, Florida Statutes), and the general records schedule published by the Florida Department of State's Division of Library and Information Services (notably, schedules GS1-SL and GS5).

Records are defined as "all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, sound recordings, data processing software, or other material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, or means of transmission, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by an agency." Employees are prohibited from destroying documents in violation of law or policy, in response to, or in anticipation of, an investigation, audit, or litigation.

- (11) *Proper Use and Protection of University Assets.* The University community will strive to preserve, protect and enhance the University's assets by making prudent and effective use of University resources and property and by accurately reporting its financial condition. All funds provided for research must be spent in ways consistent with funding requirements and in compliance with guidelines on allowable costs (i.e. 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E).

- (12) *Misuse of Public Position.* Employees may not use or attempt to use their official position or any property or resource within their trust to obtain special privilege, benefit, or exemption for themselves or others.

(13) *Fraud.* As outlined in BOT Policy 2020-01, fraud occurs when an individual obtains something of value through willful misrepresentation, including, but not limited to, intentional misstatements or intentional omissions of amounts or disclosures in financial statements to deceive users of financial statements, theft of an entity's assets, bribery, or the use of one's position for personal enrichment through the deliberate misuse or misapplication of an organization's resources. Fraud generally means an act of deception, bribery, forgery, extortion, theft, misappropriation, false representation, conspiracy, corruption, collusion, embezzlement, or intentional concealment or the omission of material facts. Members of the University community must mitigate the risk of fraud by fulfilling their duties honestly, while immediately reporting any observed or suspected irregularities to their immediate supervisor.

University employees, consultants, vendors, or persons doing business with FAMU who have knowledge of a fraud, misappropriation, or other impropriety shall immediately notify his/her supervisor and/or the Division of Audit.

- (14) *Complaints may be made anonymously.* Acts of fraud, as well as the failure to report incidents in good-faith or suspected incidents of fraud, is a violation of this Regulation. Examples of fraud include, but are not limited to:
- a. Any dishonest or fraudulent act;
 - b. Falsification of documents;
 - c. Misappropriation of funds, supplies, or other assets;
 - d. Impropriety in the handling or reporting of money or financial transactions;
 - e. Destruction, removal, or inappropriate use of records, furniture, fixtures, and equipment; or,
 - f. Any similar or related irregularity.

The Division of Audit has the primary responsibility for the investigation of all suspected fraudulent acts as defined above. The Division of Audit will issue reports to appropriate designated personnel detailing the findings.

- (15) *Health and Safety.* Members of the University community are expected to perform their duties in accordance with applicable health and safety laws, regulations, policies, and procedures. Members are also responsible for compliance with the health, safety, and risk management program and are required to immediately report workplace/campus injuries, illnesses, and unsafe conditions to the University Department of Environmental Health and Safety and the Office of Risk Manager.
- (16) *Sustainability.* We are all responsible for the continued viability of Florida A&M University and our local and regional communities. The University is committed to operating in an environmentally responsible manner, from the procurement of services to the operation of offices and facilities, and other business activities. Members of the University community must comply with all applicable environmental laws and regulations as well as commitments to sustainable practices and environmental protection outlined by the University's Sustainability Institute.
- (17) *Information Technology.* Pursuant to University Regulation 5.003 (Electronic Connectivity), members of the University community play a role in safeguarding information systems by adhering to established University controls and applicable law and policy. Members do not have an expectation of privacy in the use of University computers and systems. Cyber security and systems training are required of all employees before they are permitted access to these systems. Members are prohibited from using University computers or systems in furtherance of personal or political business.

Information Technology Services tracks software vulnerabilities and applies patches as soon as they become available. To that end, users of the University network shall not:

- Undermine the security or the integrity of computing systems or

- networks or attempt to gain unauthorized access;
- Use any computer program or device to intercept or decode passwords or similar access control information;
- Knowingly or intentionally transmit, download, or upload any material that contains viruses, trojan horses, worms, time bombs, cancelbots, phishing, or any other harmful programs;
- Transmit, download, or upload any material that contains software or other material protected by federal or state intellectual property laws unless the user owns or controls the rights thereto or has received all necessary consents; or
- Use FAMU electronic connectivity for the exchange of pirated software.

(18) *Reporting Suspected Violations.*

- a. Members of the University community are required to report violations of applicable University policy, government contracts, and grant requirements, as well as state and federal laws and regulations. Prompt reporting of possible violations is required as it gives the University the opportunity to investigate the matter and take corrective action where needed. Complainants may initially report their concerns through their normal management chain of command, beginning with one's immediate supervisor. If it is inappropriate to report to the immediate supervisor, (e.g., the suspected violation is by the manager or the complainant is generally uncomfortable), individuals may go to a higher level of management within the college, department, or report directly to the Office of Compliance and Ethics, Office of General Counsel, Division of Audit, the Office of Human Resources or the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs. Managerial and supervisory personnel must maintain an open-door policy and take proactive measures to assure their staff that the institution supports a culture that values ethical behavior and compliance.
- b. Managers/Supervisors are responsible for reporting complaints received to the Office of Compliance and Ethics, either directly or through the

University's Compliance and Ethics Hotline. As appropriate, the Office of Compliance and Ethics coordinates with the Division of Audit, the Office of Human Resources, the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs and other relevant areas, both internal and external. Employees are not exempt from the consequences of wrongdoing by self-reporting, although self-reporting may be considered in the determination of an appropriate course of action.

- c. Compliance and Ethics Hotline. Members of the University community may use the University Compliance and Ethics Hotline to report complaints of misconduct outlined in this Regulation. The Hotline allows reporting by phone or online, with an option for anonymous reporting.
- d. Other Reporting Avenues. While the Office of Compliance and Ethics coordinates the Compliance and Ethics Hotline, violations may also be reported internally to the offices listed above. Externally, suspected violations of state and federal laws may be reported to the Florida Board of Governors' Office of Inspector General and Director of Compliance or the State of Florida Whistleblower's Hotline.

(19) *False Reports.* Submitting a report that is known to be false (made in bad faith) is a violation of this Regulation and will result in discipline up to and including potential termination from employment, in accordance with applicable University regulations, policies, and collective bargaining agreements.

(20) *Investigation.* Preliminary Review and Investigation. University offices tasked with investigation take every reported concern seriously. All concerns will be assessed through intake to determine the appropriate course of action. If an investigation is warranted, such initial investigation will be completed within a reasonable timeframe. The primary investigator will provide appropriate updates to the parties.

- a. Independence. Investigators are responsible for establishing and maintaining independence so that conclusions and recommendations are impartial in both fact and appearance. The investigator must consider

organizational, personal, and external impairments that impact the investigators' ability to perform work impartially.

- b. Confidentiality. Such reports may be made confidentially, and even anonymously. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent legal and practicable, informing only those personnel who have a need to know such information.
- c. Cooperation. All members of the University community are required to cooperate fully in any external or internal investigation. A copy of this Regulation will be provided to all employees.
- d. Interference. The integrity of an audit, investigation, or administrative action is vital in ensuring a fair and equitable outcome for all parties involved. Members of the University community are prohibited from impeding any audit or investigation. Examples of interference includes, but is not limited to: disclosing information inappropriately, making false statements, failing to respond timely to requests for information or tampering with evidence.
- e. Referral. Decisions to prosecute or refer the investigation results to the appropriate law enforcement and/or regulatory agencies for independent investigation will be made in conjunction with legal counsel and executive level leadership.
- f. Investigative Reports. Despite the disposition, investigative activity will result in a written report. Reports shall be fair, objective, and present the results of investigation in a clear manner.

(21) *Retaliation.* Members of the University community are prohibited from engaging in retaliation against another for reporting compliance or ethics related concerns or participating in an investigation due to such reports. Findings of retaliation are independent of the underlying claim of violation and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, in accordance with applicable University regulations, policies, and collective bargaining agreements.

(22) *Enforcement.* Members of the University community are responsible for annually completing mandatory compliance and ethics trainings, as well as maintaining compliance with law, regulation, policy, and making ethical decisions. Failure to follow the standards outlined serves as a violation of this Regulation, as well as the originating regulation/policy, if applicable. Members of the University community who violate this Regulation will be subject to personnel action, up to and including termination, in accordance with applicable University regulations, policies, and collective bargaining agreements.

(23) *Equal Opportunity.* It is the policy of Florida A&M University that each member of the University community is permitted to work or attend class in an environment free from any form of discrimination including race, religion, color, age, disability, sex, sexual harassment, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, national origin, and veteran status as prohibited by State and Federal Statutes. This commitment, identified in several regulations, including 10.103, applies to all areas affecting students, employees, applicants for admission and applicants for employment. It is also relevant to the University's selection of contractors, suppliers of goods and services and any employment conditions and practices.

Specific Authority: Chapter 112, Part III, Florida Statutes; Section 7(c), Art. IX, Fla. Const., BOG Regulation 1.001. History–New 10-05; Amended 2-9-2020, 11-30-2022, 08-11-23.