

Draft of Proposed New Rules and Regulations 2.24: Mutual Respect Policy

1. The Board of Trustees is deeply committed to the premise that full participation in the educational process requires a respectful environment conducive to working and learning for all members of the educational community and free from harassment.
2. The Board recognizes that the First Amendment of the United States Constitution protects the expression of ideas that are regarded as unpopular or offensive. The Board is committed to protecting freedom of speech and the free exchange of ideas that fosters knowledge, individual growth, and tolerance for new and different ideas. The Board also is committed to maintaining a climate of academic freedom. *
3. Behavior or conduct that is deemed to harass an individual or individuals should be reported to a supervisor who will investigate and monitor the matter. If warranted, the supervisor may refer the appropriate party(ies) to counseling and/or training. Behavior or conduct that is deemed threatening or physically/verbally abusive to any individual or group of individuals employed by, enrolled in, or visiting any of the sites within, the District, which continues beyond the first step of intervention above, may be cause for disciplinary action against that individual in accordance with District Rules and Regulations, collective bargaining agreements, and Student Rights and Responsibilities.
4. The District Office and the Colleges will educate staff and students on this policy and on the deleterious effects of behaviors or conduct that reflect hatred or contempt based on race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, marital status or physical or mental disability.
5. The District Office and the Colleges shall take steps necessary to provide a positive educational and employment environment that encourages equal educational and employment opportunities.
6. The District Office and the Colleges will promote equality and mutual respect and understanding among all groups and individuals.

***Statement on Academic Freedom**

The San Mateo County Community College District is dedicated to maintaining a climate of academic freedom encouraging the sharing and cultivation of a wide variety of viewpoints. Academic freedom expresses our belief in inquiry, informed debate and the search for truth; academic freedom is necessary in order to provide students with a variety of ideas, to encourage them to engage in critical thinking and to help them understand conflicting opinions.

Academic freedom encompasses the freedom to study, teach, and express ideas, including unpopular or controversial ones, without censorship or political restraint. Academic freedom, rather than being a license to do or say whatever one wishes, requires professional competence, open inquiry and rigorous attention to the pursuit of truth.

The District's faculty has the right to express their informed opinions which relate, directly or indirectly, to their professional activities, whether these opinions are expressed in the classroom, elsewhere on campus or at college-related functions. In a search for truth and in a context of reasoned academic debate, students also have the right to express their opinions and to question those presented by others.

Employment by the District does not in any way restrict or limit the First Amendment rights enjoyed by faculty as members of their communities. Faculty members are free to speak and write publicly on any issue, as long as they do not indicate they are speaking for the institution.

Protecting academic freedom is the responsibility of the college community. Therefore, in a climate of openness and mutual respect, free from distortion and doctrinal obligation, the District protects and encourages the exchange of ideas, including unpopular ones, which are presented in a spirit of free and open dialogue and constructive debate. *(Developed in 1991 and found in Faculty Handbooks)*