



# CODE *of* PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

THE UNIVERSITY CORPORATION



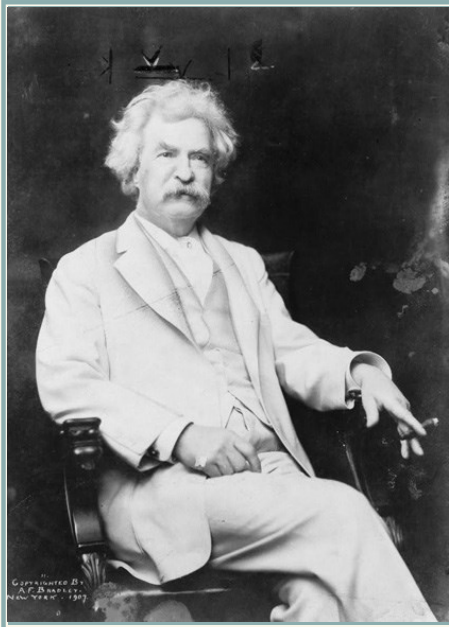
The University Corporation  
Research, Investments and Commercial Services  
California State University, Northridge



# CODE of PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

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“Right is right, and wrong is wrong, and a body ain’t got no business doing wrong when he ain’t ignorant and knows better.”

Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

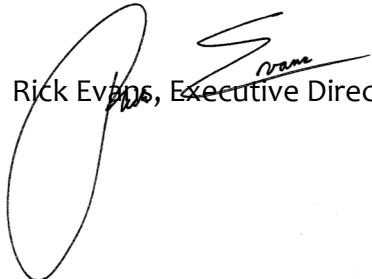
# 1. IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOU.

**Integrity. Ethics. Respect.** These are words that I hear repeatedly when staff members describe the work they do and how they do it. The principles articulated by our employees serve as the foundation of **CHOICES**, our Statement of Values, found in section 3 of this booklet. It is gratifying to know that TUC employees set high standards for themselves and rightfully expect the same from colleagues. We are fortunate to have such a good team. Yet we must not become complacent. We owe it to ourselves and to one another to stay alert to the challenges of our continuously evolving workplace.

TUC employees can sometimes be confronted with ethical issues in their daily work. The ethical implications may not always be clear cut and making the right choice may be difficult. This document is intended as a guide to help you in such situations.

The University Corporation **Code of Professional Conduct** provides guidelines by which we conduct our operations, and by which we interact with customers and with one another. While the Code is a compilation of basic standards, policies, and legal requirements, perhaps the most important element of professional conduct is good judgment — and that depends on each of us.

I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the information that follows and to use this booklet as a reference tool. Always know that there are many sources of support available to you. Take advantage of all the tools at your disposal. If you are ever faced with a legal, compliance or ethical issue, please seek assistance from your supervisor or any member of TUC's management team.

  
Rick Evans, Executive Director

## 2. ETHICS—IT MATTERS

### **What is ethics?**

Ethics is the examination of what is good and what is right. Webster's Dictionary defines professional ethics as the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group; a guiding philosophy. From an organizational perspective, ethics includes the rights and duties of the company, its employees, and its vendors, customers and colleagues. From a more individual perspective, it seeks to answer the question, *How should I act — especially when my actions affect others?*

In business, ethics is about building a 'values-based' culture. Section 3 of this booklet is a statement of TUC values, as expressed by TUC employees. Ethics starts with a shared commitment of all employees to maintain certain standards of conduct and to follow certain policies and rules. Still, rules cannot address all possible ethical dilemmas that might arise in the course of business. Rules help guide us, but often need to be interpreted and applied to specific situations to be meaningful. Our objective is to develop and support a values-based decision making process. Often, the process is as important as the conclusion. Ultimately, ethics is about both individual and institutional integrity.

### **Ethical companies are more successful!**

The social contract between business and society has changed. Society pays more attention to how a company conducts its business, how it treats its employees, and what it contributes to the greater good. There are more ethical expectations for businesses today than ever before. Success is no longer measured solely by a company's bottom line.

A company that conducts business in an ethical manner distinguishes itself and engenders respect from within and from outside.

- ◆ Employees want to work for companies with values similar to their own.

- ◆ Ethical companies foster a more satisfying and productive working environment.
- ◆ Ethical companies are able to recruit and retain top-quality employees.
- ◆ Ethical companies have a high brand distinction among consumers.
- ◆ Companies operating with integrity become a preferred consumer choice.

### **Ethical employees are more successful!**

- ◆ Ethical employees that identify themselves with their organization's values are more engaged and more professional.
- ◆ Ethical employees become more trusted and recognized by their peers, a requisite to developing leadership potential.
- ◆ Ethical employees working in ethical companies enjoy their jobs and have a high level of job satisfaction.
- ◆ Ethical, professional employees become known as people of integrity—one of the highest compliments one can receive.

TUC strives to provide each employee opportunities to fulfill his/her professional aspirations in a supportive and respectful environment. The information provided on the following pages provides general guidelines for how we seek to conduct ourselves on-the-job. The *Employee Handbook* provides more detail on the subjects covered herein.

*“It’s not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are.”*

Roy Disney

### 3. CHOICES: A STATEMENT OF OUR VALUES

TUC employees share a set of values that form our company's culture and serve as a framework for interactions with one another and with customers and colleagues.

**Conviction and Pride.** We take pride in achieving the Corporation's mission and supporting California State University Northridge in helping students realize their educational goals. Our convictions and our belief in what we do inform our actions.

**Hard Work and Flexibility.** We work hard. There is an inherent fairness to our co-workers when everyone works hard and fulfills responsibilities. We are prepared to make changes when warranted. Change is effected successfully when employees are involved in developing, analyzing and implementing the process.

**Owners Mentality.** As self-motivated stakeholders, we are enthusiastic about our work and invested in the Corporation and our jobs. We care about what we do and appreciate that it is an important piece of the big picture that is Cal State, Northridge.

**Integrity and Trust.** Trust is earned through dependability and consistency. In all dealings with customers, colleagues and co-workers, we strive to high ethical standards based on honesty, fairness and respect.

**Collaboration.** We work in teams to complete day-to-day work, improve services, and implement new initiatives. Effective collaboration depends on open and honest communication and broad information sharing between employees and within and between divisions at all levels of the organization. We treat others as we like to be treated – with kindness, civility and respect. Professionalism demands diplomacy and maturity when facing criticism or challenge. We rise above and focus on the message, not on how the message is delivered.

**Employee Focused.** The first step in providing outstanding service is high employee morale. Employees enjoy their work when they are valued and appreciated, given challenges, and provided opportunities for professional growth, continuing education and training. We work together to create a friendly, pleasant work environment that respects the balance between work and family. Corporation employees are empowered to be proactive and resourceful and deserve recognition for both group and individual achievements.

**Service.** We are committed to delivering exceptional customer service to the university community. Every interaction with a customer is an opportunity to show that we care. Customer service is both intuitive and learned; it is practiced and refined every day. We develop systems, practices, procedures and methods that support seamless service. We work SMART (*Service, Motivation, Attitude, Respect, Team*). Employees can count on management support when using good judgment in any effort to provide exceptional service.



## 4. OUR WORKPLACE

### Equal Employment Opportunity

TUC is committed to a policy of equal employment opportunity with regard to an individual's race, color, creed, sex, gender, religion, marital status, registered domestic partner status, age, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition including genetic characteristics, and sexual orientation. TUC's policy of equal employment opportunity applies to all employees and applicants for employment, and it applies to all aspects of employment, including recruitment, hiring, training, compensation, benefits, promotion, transfer, reassignment, discipline and termination. It is the duty of every employee to help maintain a work environment that promotes these policies.

### Harassment

TUC is committed to providing a work and educational environment that is free of sexual harassment, as well as other unlawful harassment based on such factors as race, color, creed, sex, gender, religion, marital status, registered domestic partner status, age, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition including genetic characteristics, and sexual orientation. In keeping with this commitment, TUC maintains a strict policy that prohibits unlawful harassment of employees by managers, supervisors, or co-workers, and unlawful harassment of students by any TUC employee. Visitors to the campus, and workers employed by the University, by other auxiliaries, or by other public or private organizations engaged in business with TUC, are expected to comply with this policy.

### Drug & Alcohol Abuse

TUC is committed to establishing and maintaining a drug-free workplace. To that end, TUC does not allow the unauthorized use of drugs or alcohol, including but not limited to, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of alcohol or controlled substances in the workplace.

### Internal Controls

TUC relies on internal controls and the personal integrity of employees to protect TUC assets against damage, theft and unauthorized use. Internal controls are critical for proper, complete and accurate accounting and financial reporting. You must understand the internal controls relevant to your position and follow the policies/procedures related to those controls. You are encouraged to talk to your supervisor if you feel that a control does not adequately detect or prevent inaccuracy, waste or fraud.

### Audits

Audits periodically are performed to help ensure compliance with established policies, procedures and controls and identify potential weaknesses

so they may be remedied. You must cooperate with auditors and provide clear and truthful information.

### Litigation Hold

Records relevant to a legal action must be preserved. This is a legal or litigation 'hold.' Employees must not knowingly destroy or discard information that is subject to a legal hold.

### Fraud

Any deception or trickery to gain profit or unfair or dishonest advantage is considered fraud. Engaging in fraudulent activity violates TUC policy and the law and carries severe penalties.

## 5. SAFEGUARDING OUR COMPANY

### **Confidentiality**

It is the policy of TUC to ensure that the operations, activities and business affairs of TUC, its employees, customers, suppliers and vendors are kept confidential and divulged only to individuals within TUC with both a need to know and authorization to receive such information. Confidential information obtained through employment with TUC may not be used for the purpose of furthering either current or future outside employment or for obtaining personal gain or profit. If, during the course of your employment, you acquire confidential or proprietary information about TUC, its employees, independent agents, or clients, such information is to be handled in strict confidence and may not be discussed with anyone not employed with TUC. Employees are also responsible for the internal security of such information. If you are in doubt as to whether certain information may be divulged, you should not disclose the information. If you have any questions, you should discuss them with your manager.

All records and files maintained by TUC are confidential and remain the property of TUC. Records and files are not to be disclosed to any outside party without the express permission of the Executive Director. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: financial records; business, marketing, and strategic plans; personnel and payroll records regarding current and former employees; the identity of, contact information for, and any other account information on customers, vendors, and suppliers; inventions, programs, trade secrets, formulas, techniques, and processes; and any other documents or information regarding TUC's operations, procedures, or practices. Confidential information may not be removed from TUC premises without express authorization.

### **Credit Card Security**

In today's day and age we are all faced with the possibility of identity theft. This frequently involves stolen personal credit information. TUC takes the protection of personal credit information very seriously. All credit card data printed on paper or received by fax must be protected against unauthorized access.

*Continued ...*

### **Media Contacts**

All media inquiries regarding TUC and its operations must be referred to the Executive Director. Only the Executive Director is authorized to make or approve public statements pertaining to TUC or its operations. No employee, unless specifically designated by the Executive Director, is authorized to make statements to the media on behalf of TUC. Any employee who would like to write and/or publish an article, paper or other publication on behalf of TUC must obtain prior approval from the Executive Director.

### **Social Media Policy**

TUC recognizes that social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. have become important communication channels. Social media is defined as any social networking sites, internet forums, blogs, micro-blogs and other user-created video, audio, text or multimedia that are published and shared in a social environment

The following are general guidelines for use of social media:

- ◆ Confidential or proprietary TUC information or similar information of third parties, who have shared such information on behalf of TUC, should not be shared publicly on these social media channels.
- ◆ Employees should exercise discretion, thoughtfulness and respect for colleagues and associates and refrain from disparaging remarks against TUC, the University or any of its employees.
- ◆ Employees should refrain from reporting, speculating, discussing or giving any opinions on TUC business related matters that could be considered sensitive, confidential or disparaging.

## 6. AVOIDING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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### **Conflicts of Interest**

An example of a conflict of interest would be engaging in a business that competes with TUC. A conflict would occur if a TUC employee or close relative accepted a gratuity, gift or premium from a vendor, who seeks to do business with TUC, or if a TUC project, department, or agency entered into a business relationship with an entity that is substantially owned or operated by a TUC employee or his/her relative.

As a TUC employee, you should not directly or indirectly engage in any conduct that is disloyal, disruptive, competitive, or damaging to TUC, either on or off the job. For example, employees should not accept outside employment if that employment is to be conducted during the hours that the employee is working for TUC, or if such employment conflicts with the effectiveness of the employee's work for TUC. Employees should not utilize TUC information or services for personal purposes, nor should they engage in activities that are unrelated to TUC work during working hours.

TUC materials, equipment, information, ideas etc. should not be used for personal gain or given to an outside firm or individual except through regular channels and with appropriate authorization by TUC management.

Some TUC employees are required to file Statements of Economic Interest. These employees should disclose categories and complete a Statement of Economic Interests and relevant schedules. Disclosure should include personal economic interests that could be significantly affected through the exercise of official duties by the designated employee.

### **Employment of Relatives**

Where potential problems of supervision, safety, security, morale, or potential conflicts of interest exist, relatives of employees will not be eligible for employment with TUC. 'Relatives' include a spouse, child, parent, sister, brother, in-law, step-parent, step-sibling, step-child, or any person involved in a legally binding guardianship or relationship with the employee, and/or residing in the home of the employee.

If two employees become subject to the restrictions of this policy after they are hired, one or both of the employees must seek a transfer or reassignment to eliminate the actual or potential conflict of interest.

Other relationships between two employees may also present actual or potential conflicts of interest. TUC may take appropriate action, which includes but is not necessarily limited to transfer, reassignment, shift change or if necessary, termination.

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## Gifts

TUC employees should use the highest standards in making decisions, placing both themselves and TUC in the best possible light. One should avoid any action that is not verifiable or that could be interpreted as dishonest. Under such a high standard, receiving ‘income’ is not limited to cash gifts. Income may include any salary, wage, advance, dividend, interest or rent. It may include proceeds from a sale, a gift, loan, forgiveness or payment of a debt, reimbursement for expenses, per diem or contribution to an insurance or pension program paid by any person or entity other than TUC. Under this standard, gifts including real or personal property, guest accommodations or recreation are considered personal income.

Meals may be paid by a company or vendor when the meeting is to conduct business. While attending trade shows, conferences or similar functions, TUC employees should use good judgment regarding entertainment provided by vendors. Promotional gifts, sample merchandise or prizes from vendors should be shared with others in the organization or raffled off in a drawing for all employees. Employees should never order merchandise directly from a vendor; all orders, merchandise, invoices and payments should be handled through normal channels.

# 7. SAFEGUARDING EMPLOYEE PRIVACY

From time to time, TUC may receive inquiries from outside individuals regarding the status of your employment. For example, we may receive calls from banks, credit agencies, or prospective employers, asking us whether you are employed with TUC, your current position with TUC, your salary, or why you may have left TUC. We have a strict policy of providing only limited information. Consequently, no employee (other than certain authorized people in TUC Human Resources) may provide **any** information regarding current or former employees (either on or off-the-record) to any non-employee without the specific written approval of the Executive Director. This includes letters of reference, which may not be provided unless approved in writing by the Executive Director. Indeed, no employee of TUC is authorized to disclose any information, verbal or written, concerning any employee or former employee. The only information that we provide is your dates of employment and your position with TUC. We will not reveal your salary, although if we are asked to confirm your salary, we will only say “yes” or “no” to a particular amount. TUC’s strict policy prohibits us from revealing any information about why you may have left TUC employment. However, in some instances, you may want us to reveal additional information. In those instances, we require written authorization from you, permitting us to divulge such additional information.

## 8. SOME DO'S...

### **Recognize harmful activity.**

Know and comply with the policies that apply to the work you do and the decisions you make. Familiarize yourself with policies, laws and regulations that apply to your job. Unethical, illegal or unsafe activity can result in serious consequences including fines or lawsuits against TUC. Our Code and policies give you the information you need to perform your job ethically.

### **Think before you act.**

Conduct all TUC business according to the highest ethical and legal standards. Act with integrity. If you are unsure, ask yourself:

- ◆ Is it illegal?
- ◆ Does it violate our code of conduct?
- ◆ Does it feel like the right thing to do?
- ◆ Could it cause loss or harm to co-workers, the public, TUC or companies doing business with us?
- ◆ Would I feel uncomfortable if others knew about it?

If you answer 'yes' to any of these questions, don't do it!

### **Speak up.**

Report concerns and known or suspected misconduct immediately. If you see or suspect unethical, illegal or unsafe activity, don't ignore it. Let us know. By reporting your concerns, you could keep a potentially serious situation from harming TUC. There are a few ways to report concerns:

1. Talk to your manager, or any senior manager.
2. Talk to TUC Human Resources.
3. To report anonymously, call 855-387-2494, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; online at: [reportlineweb.com/tuc](http://reportlineweb.com/tuc).
4. Report criminal activity to the WE TIP hotline operated by CSUN Public Safety, 1-818-677-TIPS (8477) or the California Attorney General's Whistleblower Hotline, 1-800-952-5225.

**Whistleblowers are Protected.** When employees notify an appropriate government or law enforcement agency that they have reason to believe their employer is violating a state or federal statute, or violating or not complying with a state or federal rule or regulation, those employees are protected from retaliation. Indeed, TUC has a strict policy that prohibits retaliating against employees who make such reports and prohibits retaliating against employees who have made such reports while employed in any former employment. TUC also does not permit retaliation against an employee who refuses to participate in an activity that would result in a violation of a state or federal statute, or a violation or noncompliance with a state or federal rule or regulation. If you have information regarding possible violations of state or federal statutes, rules, or regulations, or violations of fiduciary responsibility by TUC, we encourage you to report it immediately to your supervisor, manager or the Executive Director so that we may investigate.

## 9. AND SOME DON'Ts

TUC employees should treat each other with dignity and respect and abide by rules of conduct based on honesty, good taste, fair play, and safety. Following are some, but not all examples of 'what not to do:'

- ◆ Falsify employment records, employment information or other TUC records
- ◆ Record the work time of another employee or allow any other employee to record your work time, or allow falsification of any timecard, either your own or another employee's
- ◆ Use or remove TUC or University property, equipment, time, materials, or facilities without authorization
- ◆ Provoke or take part in a fight during working hours or while on TUC or University premises
- ◆ Participate in horseplay or practical jokes on TUC time or while on TUC or University premises
- ◆ Carry firearms or any other dangerous weapons while on TUC or University premises at any time
- ◆ Cause, create or participate in a disruption of any kind during working hours on TUC or University property
- ◆ Use abusive or threatening language toward a co-worker, supervisor, member of management, or customer
- ◆ Fail to notify a supervisor when unable to report to work
- ◆ Fail to obtain permission to leave work for any reason during normal working hours
- ◆ Fail to observe working schedules, including rest and meal periods
- ◆ Fail to provide a physician's certificate when requested or required
- ◆ Sleep or malingering on the job
- ◆ Deliberately or carelessly damage or destroy any TUC or University property or the property of any employee or customer
- ◆ Be insubordinate, fail or refuse to obey the orders or instructions of a supervisor or member of management
- ◆ Make or accept excessive personal telephone calls during working hours, except in cases of emergency
- ◆ Work overtime without authorization or refuse to work assigned overtime
- ◆ Wear unprofessional or inappropriate styles of dress or hair while working
- ◆ Harass other employees or customers
- ◆ Solicit or accept gratuities from customers or clients
- ◆ Be excessively absent or tardy
- ◆ Abuse leaves of absence or sick leave
- ◆ Report to work intoxicated or under the influence of non-prescribed drugs
- ◆ Be involved in illegal and non-prescribed drugs
- ◆ Bring or use alcoholic beverages on TUC premises, without permission
- ◆ Gamble on TUC premises
- ◆ Fail to maintain the confidentiality of TUC, its employees, agents or customers
- ◆ Fail to report accidents, breakage or damage to equipment which occurs when an employee is assigned to use such equipment.

## 10. OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of The University Corporation is to provide services and solutions that address the needs of California State University, Northridge; to support the academic, research and creative endeavors of its students, faculty and staff; and to enhance the quality of campus life. By fostering learning and professional development, The University Corporation empowers its staff to be proactive and resourceful in order to achieve the highest standard of customer service to the University community.









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Research, Investments and Commercial Services

California State University, Northridge

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