



## **PASADENA AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES BYLAWS**

**Title: Trustees Code of Ethics (Including Student Trustee)**  
**Legal Authority: Board of Trustees Minutes, August 17, 1994;**  
**September 3, 1997**

**Bylaw No. 1450**  
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In support of the mission and goals of the College, the Board of Trustees of Pasadena City College adopts this code of Ethics in order to promote and secure the Board's commitment to quality education:

1. Understanding that the Board can legally function only as a group, each member should exercise appropriate care to speak as a member of the Board and accurately represent Board policy to the community. Personal opinions should be identified as such.
2. It is recognized that Trustees may from time to time have to balance the special needs and desired advantages of their own areas with the good of the entire community college district and its student population. Each Trustee shall, as to such matters, make a particular effort to consider all of the facts and arrive at a sound and fair conclusion.
3. Board members should recognize that the Board makes policy and employs the Superintendent/President to administer the policies. Rather than dealing directly with the staff, it is appropriate for Board members to take their concerns directly to the Superintendent/President. (See attached Protocols.)
4. Trustees should understand that while each Board member has the right, if not the duty, to speak strongly as to issues, a demonstration of respect and consideration for each other, the College staff, and members of the community, will facilitate positive decision making at the College. (See attached Norms.) Attempts should be made to re-establish collegial communications in the event that violations of norms are perceived to have occurred.
5. Trustees should commit appropriate and reasonable time to College governance; support the College in the community; and make reasonable attempts to maintain and upgrade their governance skills. To this end they should willingly participate in such educational conferences and workshops as will be appropriate for the respective Trustees. Each trustee is encouraged to attend at least one meeting of a professional association of his/her choice, such as the California Community College League, during each four-year, elected term.
6. Trustees should be aware of the California laws governing conflicts of interest of public officials. In addition to the laws, Trustees should also be aware of activities that create the perception of favoritism or personal gain. Public perceptions that Board members are furthering their own interests rather than those of the District do harm to the College.
7. Board members shall maintain confidentiality as to closed sessions. While most of what the Board does is and should be public, closed session confidentiality is required. Of prime importance are such closed session matters as the hiring and dismissing of personnel, collective bargaining with employee groups, real property sales and purchases, liability claims against the district, and other closed session items. Further,

- the Board will be deprived of a frank exchange of views if Board members breach confidentiality with the result that other Board members will thereafter refrain from such exchanges. (See attached Norms.)
8. The Board president and the Superintendent/ President are authorized to consult with legal counsel when they become aware of or are informed about actual or perceived violations by a member of the Board of pertinent laws and regulations, including but not limited to conflict of interest, open and public meetings, confidentiality of closed session information, and use of public resources. Violations of law may be referred to the District Attorney or Attorney General as prescribed by law.
  9. Violation of the Board's Code of Ethics will be addressed by the Board president, who will first discuss the violation with the trustee to seek to reach a resolution. If resolution is not achieved and further action is deemed necessary, the Board president may appoint an ad hoc committee to examine the matter and recommend further courses of action to the Board. Sanctions will be determined by the Board officers and may include a recommendation to the Board to censure the trustee. If the president of the Board is perceived to have violated the Code of Ethics, the vice president of the Board is authorized to pursue resolution.

**PASADENA AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
BOARD PROTOCOLS**

1. Protocol For Responding To Needs Or Complaints Expressed To An Individual Board Member
  - a. Be accessible; listen respectfully and impartially.
  - b. If the concern is not urgent or does not have policy implications:
    - (1) Refer the individual or group to the appropriate college process/person.
    - (2) Do not make any promises to the individual or group.
    - (3) Do not attempt to solve the problem
    - (4) Inform the College President and receive clarification.
  - c. If the concern is urgent or could have policy implications:
    - (1) Refer the individual or group to the appropriate college process/person.
    - (2) Do not make any promises to the individual or group.
    - (3) Do not attempt to solve the problem.
    - (4) Inform the College President and receive clarification.
    - (5) The College President will alert the Board President.
    - (6) Board officers, with the College President, will decide how to handle the issue.
      - (a) May request written report.
      - (b) May place on the Board agenda for further discussion.
2. Protocol For Responding To Needs Or Complaints Expressed In Board Meetings During Public Comment On Non-Agenda Items
  - a. The Board President thanks the speaker(s) and acknowledges that the need or complaint has been heard by the Board.
  - b. If appropriate, the Board President may make a brief statement about the issue.
  - c. The Board President will ask the College President if there is any comment from the Administration.
  - d. The Brown Act prohibits the Board from discussing or taking action on any item not on the agenda, but members may make a brief comment or ask questions in response to public comments.
  - e. The Board President will ask the College President to look into the issue and report back to the Board. The Board President will determine what form the report will take (e-mail, formal written report, etc.)
  - f. After receiving the report from the administration, the Board may decide to place the issue on a future Board agenda.
3. Protocol For Responding To Concerns Expressed During A Crisis
  - a. Be respectful; listen respectfully and impartially.
  - b. Refer the individual or group to the appropriate college process/person.
  - c. Do not make any promises to the individual or group.
  - d. Do not attempt to solve the problem.
  - e. Inform the College President and receive clarification.
  - f. The College President will alert the Board President.
  - g. Board officers, with the College President, will decide how to handle the issue.
  - h. Any written communication with the individual or group expressing the concern, or with the media, will be made by the College President and/or the Board President.
  - i. The Board may request a more formal investigation of the concerns.

4. Protocol For The Confidentiality Of Closed Sessions
  - a. The confidentiality of Closed Session creates a safe space for the candid discussion of appropriate topics.
  - b. All participants in Closed Session are required to maintain the absolute confidentiality of Closed Session discussions.
  - c. Any suspected breach of Closed Session confidentiality should be referred to the Board President immediately in accordance with Bylaw 1450.

**PASADENA AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**BOARD NORMS**

***In public session:***

1. Assume everyone means well.
2. Listen with an open mind; be open to new ideas; try it on.
3. Allow all opinions to be heard without interruption.
4. Demonstrate respect and support for one another.
5. Hold yourself accountable: be responsible; do your homework and follow through on assignments.
6. Approach issues professionally, not personally.
7. Seek consensus that is in the best interest of PCC.

***In closed session:***

1. Assume everyone means well.
2. Listen with an open mind; be open to new ideas; try it on.
3. Allow all opinions to be heard without interruption.
4. Demonstrate respect and support for one another.
5. Hold yourself accountable: be responsible; do your homework and follow through on assignments.
6. Approach issues professionally, not personally.
7. Seek consensus that is in best interest of PCC.
8. Honor absolute confidentiality.
9. Create a safe space for open discussion and frank discussion through check in/check out (start and finish of session).