

Code of Mutual Respect and Cooperation for Faculty, Staff and Students in The Eberly College of Science

The Eberly College of Science is a community dedicated to personal and academic excellence. The Code of Mutual Respect and Cooperation was developed to embody the values that we hope our faculty, staff, and students possess, consistent with the aspirational goals expressed in the Penn State Principles. The University is strongly committed to freedom of expression, and consequently, the Code does not constitute University or College policy, and is not intended to interfere in any way with an individual's academic or personal freedoms. We hope, however, that individuals will voluntarily endorse the 12 principles set forth in the Code, thereby helping us make The Eberly College of Science a place where every individual feels respected and valued, as well as challenged and rewarded.

The 12 Principles of the Code are:

1. Treat everyone equally and with respect
2. Be courteous
3. Be ready to communicate
4. Encourage others and share your expertise with them
5. Give and accept constructive criticism
6. Be receptive to change
7. Be a team player
8. Get involved
9. Have a positive attitude
10. Be honest and accept responsibility
11. Recognize other people's priorities
12. Strive to do your best

1. Treat everyone equally and with respect

Students, staff, and faculty interact with each other frequently in the university environment. Our interactions with each other can create a welcoming and productive atmosphere if we are respectful of others in the same way that we expect others to respect us. As we go about our work, we should recognize that every one has an important part to play in the operation of our university, and therefore it is to our benefit to make the organization work as efficiently as possible. That can only happen if we treat each other respectfully across peer groups and equally within those peer groups.

2. Be courteous

We should remember to show our gratitude for any assistance that we receive from anyone within the university: from the custodians and groundskeepers to the highest academic officers. Friendly greetings and expressions of appreciation will produce a healthier work environment, especially since some of us spend more time at work than we spend at home with our families. It pays to be courteous when we interact with each other.

3. *Be ready to communicate*

Our work gets done more efficiently if we communicate with each other. Many problems arise because we never talk to each other about things that might not be going smoothly or not working properly. Often we expect that others will know what we are thinking in a given situation. Instead, the opposite is usually true because it is very hard to understand how other people think or feel. So, we need to talk to each other and to make the effort to put ourselves in someone else's shoes. Our actions will help us to understand how someone else might feel as they react to a specific situation. It is essential that we communicate with each other, when things are going right and especially when things are not going as expected.

4. *Encourage others and share your expertise with them*

Since we are part of an educational institution, this is the place where we should share our knowledge with each other. We can learn a lot from others even though we may be experts in our own area. So, take a moment to show encouragement to anyone who has just started in your unit or the university, as well as younger people or those at levels below yours. Take a moment to share your enthusiasm for your job and to teach them something new that they can share with others.

5. *Give and accept constructive criticism*

A "critic" is a person who judges the merits of another person's work. We can use criticism to congratulate someone on a job that was well done and to describe ways in which other jobs can be accomplished to great satisfaction. We should always be open to such positive comments about our work and willing to learn new ways to improve our work habits. Conversely, persistent negative comments without constructive suggestions for improvement are counterproductive. Constructive criticism is given in the spirit of encouragement when we truly want to help each other to improve; and everyone benefits from this improvement.

6. *Be receptive to change*

We need to be receptive to change if we truly desire to improve our work performance. As we learn new information, we become different people because we have a broader base of knowledge from which we can view the world. This improved perspective helps us to adapt to new environments and to new coworkers, and enables us to learn even more.

7. *Be a team player*

Our university is a very big place and yet it can feel like a small place if we work together to achieve our goals. We all depend on each other to make the system work smoothly. For example, the beautiful gardens cared for by the grounds keepers put us in a happy mood as we make our way to our offices. The custodians make sure that our offices and facilities are clean and healthy for us. The staff assistants process the paperwork so that students can register for the courses that they need, and the faculty can be prepared for their classes. Every part depends on every other part whether or not we recognize those links. So, it is important that we each play our role to the best of our abilities, within our units and as part of the larger family at Penn State.

8. *Get involved*

As we become more involved in our work, we become more productive and things run more smoothly. Greater involvement in our work environment also results in improved communications between people, especially as we get to know each other better.

9. *Have a positive attitude*

As we learn and mature, we need to foster a work environment built on positive attitudes. These improved attitudes lead to constructive interactions with others and allow us to learn from them.

10. *Be honest and accept responsibility*

When things are going well, we are usually happy to take the credit for our successes. And yet, it is very hard to accept responsibility when things do not work out as planned. Our challenge is to be our own toughest critics so we can understand why our efforts resulted in certain outcomes. It takes practice to be able to review our own work, with a positive attitude, and with openness to positive criticism of ourselves. The key is to be honest with ourselves and with others. In an environment where positive criticism is readily given and received, it should be easy to accept responsibility for our actions.

11. *Recognize other people's priorities*

As we go about our busy lives, we often forget that we are not the only ones who need to get our work done. We all have to set priorities during the workday, even if each activity takes only a few minutes to complete. So, if we are respectful of others, we need to be patient and wait our turn, especially when making requests of our staff assistants who often have to deal with students and faculty simultaneously.

12. *Strive to do your best*

Positive interactions with others will enhance our work ethic and make us enjoy our work environment. We will naturally strive to do our best in a professional, constructive, and welcoming atmosphere.

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