

# Georgian American University (GAU)

## Code of Ethics and Conduct

Revised September 2008

*(GAU's Code of Ethics and Conduct has been compiled and summarized from a variety of publicly available sources. Specific references to "Academic Integrity" and "Faculty Responsibility" are excerpts from the website of GAU's affiliate, American University. Each student, lecturer and staff member of GAU must sign this Code (and each revision thereof) as a requirement for admission or employment)*

### I. Code of Ethics

This Code of Ethics is a statement of the ethical principles, values and behaviors required of staff (including lecturers) and students at GAU as embodied in the following statement:

***GAU fosters the values of openness and transparency, respect, honesty, tolerance, fairness and responsibility in social and moral, as well as academic, matters.***

This Code of Ethics is intended to assist staff and students to identify and resolve ethical issues that might arise during their employment or in the course of their studies. It is designed to guide them in their dealings with colleagues, students, the University, and local, national and international communities. The Code puts forward a set of general principles rather than detailed prescriptions. It stands beside, but does not exclude or replace, the rights and obligations of staff and students under common law.

GAU is a complex organization comprising a diversity of populations that have different relationships to one another. It is essential in such a community that all members recognize and respect not only their "own" rights and responsibilities but also the rights and responsibilities of other members of the community and those of the University itself.

GAU recognizes that many of its staff members are also bound by codes of conduct or ethics defined by learned or professional societies or groups. Staff may have multiple allegiances: to their disciplines or profession at national and international levels, to the academic profession, to the community at large and to the University. Staff and students may also have allegiances to particular religious traditions. It is recognized that these allegiances are not always in harmony. It is an obligation of a staff member or student to weigh the importance of these allegiances in each particular set of circumstances and to notify an appropriate Officer of the University wherever such conflict does or may arise.

The Code of Ethics is based on three universal ethical principles. These are Equity and Justice; Respect for People; and Personal and Professional Responsibility:

#### ***1. Equity and Justice***

People are to be treated fairly -- not discriminated against, abused or exploited. Justice is concerned with power sharing and preventing the abuse of power. In a just community all members can access opportunities that allow for their full participation and growth potential in that community.

## ***2. Respect for People***

People should be treated as individuals with rights to be honored and defended. Respect empowers others to claim their rights and to achieve their potential. Respect for the rights of other people is the basis on which individuals become members of a community and accept their social responsibilities to behave with sincerity and integrity.

## ***3. Personal and Professional Responsibility***

The principle of taking personal and professional responsibility requires not only that people avoid doing harm to others and others' property, but that they exhibit courteous behavior upholding the standards expected of all members of the University community as part of achieving a common good. In so doing they are expected to protect the rights of others and respect the diversity of all cultures and peoples. Those strong enough to assert their rights have a reciprocal duty to exercise care towards those who depend on them for their well-being. This principle involves stewardship of assets, resources and the environment.

Whenever a conflict arises between the self-interest of a staff member or student and their respective duty to the University - the issue should be disclosed to an appropriate Officer of GAU. Wherever possible the staff member or student should play no role in decision-making that might be associated with that issue other than to explain the situation and to express their own views regarding the conflict.

## **II. Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct is based on principles, values and behaviors outlined in the Code of Ethics. It is a formulation of policies, rules or guidelines that define the specific actions or procedures applicable to members of GAU for a range of specific ethical issues.

This Code applies to all staff and students of GAU. Contractors, their employees and representatives, and visitors engaging in any university-related activity are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with this Code and should be properly informed of such expectations.

### ***1. Equity and Justice***

#### ***1.1 Equity of access to employment and programs***

GAU seeks to remove any barriers that may impede the benefits and conditions of employment and the delivery of its services.

GAU is committed to providing an environment of equal opportunity, free from discrimination, for existing and prospective staff and students in the pursuit of their academic goals and the realization of their potential to contribute to the achievement of the University's mission

### *1.2 Harassment*

GAU is committed to maintaining an environment within the University that is free from harassment. Harassment in such forms as sexism, racism or bullying is inconsistent with GAU's policies and denies respect for the rights of staff and students to fair treatment. Harassment can be harmful to organizational effectiveness and may also be unlawful. GAU has adopted the following Equal Opportunity Policy Statement:

***GAU is committed to a policy of equal opportunity in employment and education. It accepts that it has a responsibility to create an environment free from discrimination, and to ensure that the principle of merit operates unhindered by regard to irrelevant criteria. To this end GAU will act to ensure that its structures are free from direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status or pregnancy, race, age, sexual preference, religious or political beliefs, impairment, family responsibility or family status.***

### *1.3 Academic Freedom*

Academic freedom is recognized and protected by GAU as essential to the proper conduct of teaching, research and scholarship. Academic and research staff should be guided by a commitment to freedom of inquiry and exercise their traditional rights to examine social values and to criticize and challenge the belief structures of society in the spirit of a responsible and honest search for knowledge and its dissemination. In this context students have the right to participate in political activities on campus.

GAU is committed to the belief that freedom of intellectual thought and enquiry and the open exchange of ideas and evidence are essential to the achievement of its mission, and it will seek to protect staff and students from any attempts to remove or reduce this freedom.

### *1.4 Union Membership*

GAU staff members have the right to join trade unions and to choose whether or not to participate in union activities. Similarly, GAU students have the right to organize and join student unions or student organizations that meet the general principles of this Code.

### *1.5 Grievances*

Staff and students of GAU are entitled to fair and equitable grievance procedures. However, staff and students are not allowed and not to be encouraged to engage in any type of protest activities that disrupt the normal activities and learning process at GAU. Any such protest shall result in disciplinary action. Grievances shall be directed to the appropriate Dean or officer of GAU., either in written form or verbally.

## *1.6 Lawful Obedience*

All members of GAU must comply with any legislative and industrial requirements, as well as the rules and regulation of the University, upholding equal opportunity and health and safety policies and procedures.

## **2.0 Respect for People**

### *2.1 Conflicts of Interest*

Staff members should take suitable measures to avoid, or appropriately deal with, any situation in which they may have, or perceive to have, a conflict of interest that could, directly or indirectly, compromise the performance of their duties or the reputation and success of GAU. When staff members become aware of such a situation they should take appropriate steps to disclose the conflict to the appropriate office at GAU. Failure to do so and continuation of such a conflict of interest may lead to disciplinary action.

Examples of relationships that may cause conflicts of interest are: family relationships, positive and negative emotional relationships (including all sexual relationships, antagonisms, close friendships) and financial relationships.

### *2.2 Acceptance of Gifts or Benefits*

Staff members should not solicit, encourage or accept gifts or benefits if it could be reasonably seen as an inducement to act in a particular way or to place a staff member under an obligation that may either directly or indirectly compromise or influence them in their official capacity, including the processes of enrollment/admissions and grading.

Gifts of a nominal value (under 20 Gel) used for promotional purposes by the donor or ones in accordance with social or cultural practice are acceptable. Gifts and Benefits received by staff members should be declared to the relevant Dean or Officer.

### *2.3 Confidentiality*

Staff members who have access to official University documentation and information must take care to maintain the integrity, confidentiality and privacy of such information to protect any individual concerned. Members of GAU should also maintain the privacy of oral communications where that has been requested.

Personal files are highly confidential and private records relating to staff members and students. It is essential that all members of GAU feel confident that information relating to them is treated in an appropriate manner, with due attention paid to non-disclosure of file contents outside normal University business transactions. Staff must only provide information when authorized by the respective Dean and then only for legitimate academic purposes. Failure by a staff member to comply with these guidelines may result in disciplinary action.

### *2.4 Intellectual Property*

Intellectual Property is recognized by GAU, including inventions and copyrights in various types of work. Formal Student and Employment Agreements provide for the ownership of intellectual property created on behalf of University.

GAU will strive to provide equitable returns to the originators of the intellectual property, both as an incentive and reward, as well as to the University.

### ***3.0 Personal and Professional Responsibility***

#### *3.1 Personal Development*

All staff must maintain and continue to develop knowledge and understanding of their area of expertise or professional field. They should continuously seek to improve work performance with an emphasis on quality skills. All staff should actively seek out ways to bring about quality improvements in their workplaces. Students should endeavor to take full value of their learning opportunities while at GAU.

#### *3.2 Outside Employment and Private Practice*

Professional and consultative work carried out by members of staff in their area of expertise is of benefit to GAU, the individual and the community. However, professional and consultative work should not conflict with the interest of the University and should be approved in writing by the appropriate Officer of GAU in accordance with the formal employment agreement.

#### *3.3 Public Comment*

Public comment includes public speaking engagements, comments on radio or television, and expressing views in letters to newspapers or in books, journals or notices or where it might be expected that the publication or circulation of the comment may spread to the community at large.

Staff members are encouraged to comment publicly. However, prior to any public comments “regarding GAU activities”, staff members must notify the appropriate Officer of GAU. When staff members are representing GAU, the highest ethical and professional standards are expected of them primarily due to the sensitivity of some issues within the community. Further, staff members shall make no negative comments regarding GAU’s competitors.

Staff members in their capacity as private citizens have a right to make public comments. If a staff member is publicly commenting on an issue not within their professional expertise, the staff member must make it clear that the comment is being made in a private capacity and NOT on behalf of GAU.

#### *3.4 Use of University Facilities and Equipment*

Members (including students) of GAU are expected to use all University facilities and equipment respectfully, efficiently, carefully and honestly. Resources should be used economically, secured against theft or misuse and avoid waste. These resources should not be used for personal purposes unless express permission has been granted in accordance with University policy.

#### *3.5 Ethical Conduct of Research*

The University expects all those engaged in research to observe high ethical standards in the conduct of that research and, when relevant, to comply with the obligations imposed by the codes of practice as outlined by the relevant funding bodies. Ethical clearances must be gained where appropriate.

### 3.6 Faculty Responsibility

Faculty members should remind students in their classes each semester of the Code of Ethics and Conduct and may require that students sign a statement that they have adhered to the *Code* when writing a specific examination or paper.

To facilitate academic honesty, faculty instructors and their assistants are expected to implement practices that will prevent or reduce opportunities for academic dishonesty, particularly for assignments, examinations and clinical work. All faculty members at GAU shall follow the following practices:

- A. Affirm the importance of academic integrity - Institutions of higher education are dedicated to the pursuit of truth. Faculty members need to affirm that the pursuit of truth is grounded in certain core values, including diligence, civility, and *honesty*.
- B. Foster a love of learning - A commitment to academic integrity is reinforced by high academic standards. Most students will thrive in an atmosphere where academic work is seen as challenging, relevant, useful, and fair.
- C. Treat students as ends in themselves - Faculty members should treat their students as ends in themselves--deserving individual attention and consideration. Students will generally reciprocate by respecting the best values of their teachers, including a commitment to academic integrity.
- D. Promote an environment of trust in the classroom - Most students are mature adults, and value an environment free of arbitrary rules and trivial assignments, where trust is earned, and given.
- E. Encourage student responsibility for academic integrity - With proper guidance, students can be given significant responsibility to help protect and promote the highest standards of academic integrity. Students want to work in communities where competition is fair, integrity is respected, and cheating is punished. They understand that one of the greatest inducements to engaging in academic dishonesty is the perception that academic dishonesty is rampant.
- F. Clarify expectations for students - Faculty members have primary responsibility for designing and cultivating the educational environment and experience. They must clarify their expectations in advance regarding honesty in academic work, including the nature and scope of student collaboration. Most students want such guidance, and welcome it in course syllabi, carefully reviewed by their teachers in class.
- G. Develop fair and relevant forms of assessment - Students expect their academic work to be fairly and fully assessed. Faculty members should use--and continuously revise--forms of assessment that require active and creative thought, and promote learning opportunities for students.
- H. Reduce opportunities to engage in academic dishonesty - Prevention is a critical line of defense against academic dishonesty. Students should not be tempted or induced to engage in acts of academic dishonesty by ambiguous policies, undefined or unrealistic standards for collaboration, inadequate classroom management, or poor examination security.

- I. Challenge academic dishonesty when it occurs - Students observe how faculty members behave, and what values they embrace. Faculty members who ignore or trivialize academic dishonesty send the message that the core values of academic life, and community life in general, are not worth any significant effort to enforce.
- J. Help define and support campus-wide academic integrity standards.

#### ***4.0 Academic Integrity***

*GAU requires the highest standards of academic integrity. The following are examples of academic dishonesty that are prohibited.*

- A. Plagiarism - To plagiarize is to use the work, ideas, or words of someone else without attribution. Plagiarism may involve using someone else's wording without using quotation marks—a distinctive name, a phrase, a sentence, or an entire passage or essay. It may also involve misrepresenting the sources that were used. The issue of plagiarism applies to *any* type of work, including exams, papers, or other writing, computer programs, art, photography, or video.
- B. Inappropriate Collaboration - Close collaboration on academic work requires acknowledgment. Inappropriate collaboration involves working with someone else in developing, organizing, or revising a project (such as a paper, an oral presentation, a research project, or a take-home examination) without acknowledging that person's help. Specific policies regarding collaborative work, peer review, use of tutors, and editing may vary with individual professors.
- C. Dishonesty in Examinations (In-Class or Take-Home) - An examination is to be solely a student's own work, unless otherwise directed by the instructor. No communication is allowed between or among students, nor are students allowed to consult books, papers, study aids or notes, without explicit permission. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, copying from another's paper; giving unauthorized assistance; obtaining unauthorized advance knowledge of questions to an examination; or use of mechanical or marking devices or procedures for the purpose of achieving false scores on machine-graded examinations. Specific policies regarding examinations may vary with individual professors.
- D. Dishonesty in Papers - Students are prohibited from submitting any material prepared by or purchased from another person or company. All papers and materials submitted for a course must be the student's original work, unless the sources are otherwise cited (see A and B above).
- E. Work Done for One Course and Submitted to Another - Students may not present the same work in more than one course. Under exceptional circumstances, faculty members may permit a significant piece of research to satisfy requirements in two classes. However, both professors must agree in advance to this arrangement. Students are reminded that when incorporating their own past research into current projects, they need to reference such previous work.
- F. Deliberate Falsification of Data - Students may not deliberately falsify data or distort supporting documentation for course work or other academic activity.
- G. Interference with Other Students' Work - Students may not intentionally interfere with the work of others, such as by sabotaging laboratory experiments or research, giving misleading information, or disrupting class work.

- H. Copyright Violations - Copyright laws must be observed. These laws govern practices such as making use of printed materials, duplicating computer software, photoduplicating copyrighted materials, and reproducing audio-visual works.
- I. Requesting or suggesting that a faculty or GAU staff member change a grade for any reason other than an error in the grading process.

### ***5.0 Specific Conduct Policies***

GAU has adopted some specific policies as follows:

- A. Dress Code – GAU does not have a strict dress code for staff or students. The environment at GAU should foster both creativity and respect. Dress should be comfortable for each individual and at the same time not be distracting to others. However, clothes with disrespectful or inappropriate slogans or phrases are not allowed. Males should not wear hats or caps inside, unless required due to some health reason (and approved by the GAU Doctor).
- B. Alcohol – Unless expressly approved by GAU management, no alcohol shall be brought into or consumed at GAU.
- C. Drugs – GAU has a zero-tolerance policy for non-prescription drugs and prohibits their possession, sale or use at GAU.
- D. Weapons – GAU prohibits any device that could be used as a weapon to harm another person or property, including knives, guns, fireworks, or other explosive devices.
- E. Smoking – GAU is a non-smoking facility “inside” – allowing smoking only outside and on balconies and terraces.

### ***6.0 Enforcement and Disciplinary Action***

Depending on the severity of the violation of this code by staff, students or lecturers, various disciplinary actions may be taken by the appropriate GAU officer as follows:

- 1) Immediate suspension, pending referral to the Review Board (see below)
- 2) Immediate referral to the Review Board
- 3) For minor violations:

1<sup>st</sup> violation – written warning which is documented in their permanent file. At the discretion of the President of GAU, student may be subject to such disciplinary action as:

- Providing verbal and/or written apology or essay
- Prevented from using GAU facilities, other than classrooms or library
- Other action as appropriate.

2<sup>nd</sup> violation - brought in front of a Review Board established by the President of GAU. For students, the review board shall include representatives from the student body. For faculty members, the review board shall include representatives from the faculty.

Based on the findings of the Review Board, GAU has the right and obligation to take appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or expulsion from GAU. Should the infraction also be in violation of Georgian Law, the appropriate authorities will be notified.



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I hereby certify that I have fully read, understand and agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and Conduct contained herein.