

**POLICY:**                   **CODE OF ETHICS**

**CATEGORY:**            Governance

**EFFECTIVE:**           January 1992

**LAST REVISED:**      February 2020

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**1.    DEFINITIONS**

'Association' means The Students' Association of Mount Royal University.

'University' means Mount Royal University, its Administration, Faculty and Staff.

'Governor' means the individuals elected or appointed from and by the membership who together form the Board, the governing body of SAMRU.

'Student Representative' means all persons appointed or elected to the Representation Executive Council, General Faculties Council, the SAMRU Advisory Committee, and all other formal student representative appointments made to University or outside bodies.

'Staff Member' means all persons employed by the Students' Association of Mount Royal University in a paid capacity, whether full-time, part-time, temporary, permanent, continuing term or term certain.

“Service Volunteer' means all persons employed by the Students' Association of Mount Royal University to implement aspects of the Association's programs or services in an unpaid capacity.

**2.    INTRODUCTION**

This Code is designed as a set of guidelines to provide direction to governors, student representatives, service volunteers and staff members while conducting Students' Association affairs.

The Code supplements the By-Laws of the Association and is binding to every governor, student representative, staff member and service volunteer. Failure to comply with this Code may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Governors, student representatives, staff members and service volunteers need to demonstrate ethical and professional conduct to maintain the confidence of the membership and the public. This commitment includes proper use of authority and appropriate actions in group and individual behaviour when representing the Association.

**3.    PRIMARY RULES TO FOLLOW IN REPRESENTING THE ASSOCIATION**

- 3.1    Governors, student representatives, service volunteers and staff must recognize that it is their first duty to represent the Association when employed by or volunteering with SAMRU.
- 3.2    Governors, student representatives, service volunteers and staff members must not confuse their own views with those of the Association. It is the responsibility of the governor, student representative, service volunteer or staff member to know the Association by-laws, policies and procedures, and keep up to date with all changes and reforms.
- 3.3    Governors, student representatives, service volunteers and staff members may speak on behalf of the Association only with the consent of the Association.

- 3.4 Governors, student representatives, service volunteers and staff members must abide by the Policies and Procedures of the Association.
- 3.5 Governors, student representatives, service volunteers and staff members must be conscientious in the preparation, organization and revision of subject matter for all representative functions.
- 3.6 Governors, student representatives, service volunteers and staff members must perform their duties and responsibilities with diligence, courtesy, fairness, straightforward communication, and integrity.

#### **4. AVOIDING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND CONFLICTS OF LOYALTY**

All Governors, student representatives, and staff members have a position of trust with the membership and the public, and therefore have a number of legal and ethical responsibilities to fulfill.

- 4.1 All Governors, student representatives, and staff members must ensure that their vocational activities, personal or political allegiances or employment outside the Students' Association do not affect their ability to meet their assigned job responsibilities. Governors, student representatives, staff members and service volunteers must avoid any conflict of interest.
- 4.2 While conducting Association business, Governors, student representatives, and staff members must only use proper channels of communication such as: Representation Executive Council, Student Governing Board, General Faculties Council, the SAMRU Advisory Committee, Student Centre Liaison Committee, and all other formal representative appointments made to University or outside bodies.
- 4.3 Governors, student representatives, and staff members must not misrepresent their position; Students' Association By-Laws are clear and specific on who can commit the Students' Association or act for the Association in its dealings with the University or outside organizations.
- 4.4 Governors, student representatives, and staff members must not exploit their position for private gain or personal advancement. There must be no self-dealing for personal gain or advantage, or any conduct of private business or personal services between any Governors, student representatives, or staff members and the Association. Exceptions can occur only when there is openness, competitive opportunity, and equal access to information.
- 4.5 SAMRU's Governors, student representatives, staff and service volunteers may not use SAMRU's resources – including but not limited to contact information of any SAMRU member, ratified clubs, staff or supplier – to further their own private gain (such as a private enterprise related to selling merchandise or consulting services or contracts for services).
- 4.6 Governors, student representatives, and service volunteers must not use their positions to obtain employment within the Association for themselves or their family members or friends. If a Governor, student representative, or a service volunteer, or their family members or friends, is/are being considered for employment, the Governor, student representative, or service volunteer must temporarily withdraw from deliberation, voting and access to applicable Association information. It is a best practice to avoid hiring former Governors and former members of the Representation Executive Council for a period of time, usually two years, following their terms to help ensure that employment selections are not biased or unduly influenced.
- 4.7 Staff members must not use their positions to obtain employment within the Association for their family members or friends. If a staff member's family members or friends are being considered for employment, the staff member must temporarily withdraw from deliberation, voting and access to applicable Association information.

- 4.8 When power differentials exist amongst or between Governors, student representatives, staff and/or service volunteers, those holding positions of authority shall not abuse, nor seem to abuse, the power with which they are entrusted. Such relationships include, but are not limited to, those between a coach, an employment supervisor, a volunteer coordinator/manager, an elected officer, a practicum supervisor and his or her subordinates or volunteers. Anyone who enters into a sexual relationship with a person where a professional power differential exists must realize that, if a charge of sexual harassment is subsequently lodged, it will be extremely difficult to defend the conduct on grounds of mutual consent.
- 4.9 Relationships amongst or between those holding positions of authority and staff or volunteers must be disclosed to the Executive Director and, if the person in the position of authority is a Governor or a member of the Representation Executive Council, must also be disclosed to the Speaker of the Board.. Such relationships must not be allowed to interfere with the organization's legitimate lines of communication or governance authority.
- 4.10 As trustees, all Governors, student representatives, staff members, and service volunteers must act honestly, in good faith, and in the best interests of the organization. All trustees have an obligation of loyalty and a duty to uphold the integrity of the organization.
- 4.11 All trustees have a responsibility to ensure that the organization is properly managed and that property and assets are properly cared for.
- 4.12 No trustee may allow the personal interests of a third party to conflict with those of the organization.
- 4.13 All conflicts of interest and conflicts of loyalty must be reported to the Executive Director in the case of staff members and service volunteers and to the Speaker in the case of Governors and student representatives. If a decision-maker has a conflict of interest regarding a decision to be made, they must declare their conflict of interest, abstain from voting on the issue and physically absent themselves from the conversation.

## **5. SETTING THE HIGHEST STANDARDS**

In their positions, it is the duty of Governors, student representatives, and staff members to encourage ethical behavior, the fulfillment of other Governor, student representative, and staff member responsibilities, and to facilitate participation by the student membership in the affairs of the Association.

- 5.1 Governors, student representatives, and staff members must respect and maintain stated or implicit confidentiality in the performance of their responsibilities to SAMRU.
- 5.2 Governors, student representatives, and staff members must encourage constructive criticisms and suggestions for improvements, and discourage destructive criticism from any source. Governors, student representatives, and staff members must not participate in or condone malicious statements or actions that harm the membership, staff or integrity of the Association. This includes avoiding unsupported negative assumptions about others' work or intentions.
- 5.3 Where a policy or procedural change is sought, Governors, student representatives, and staff members must utilize approved procedures and channels of communication within the Students' Association.
- 5.4 Governors, student representatives, and staff members must not allow prejudice to obscure their judgments. In particular, Governors, student representatives, and staff members must adhere to the Alberta Human Rights Act which means they may not discriminate on any of the prohibited grounds including race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, source of income, and sexual orientation. Discriminatory actions discredit both the individual and the Association. Governors, student representatives, and staff members must strive to protect all members of the Association from such discrimination.

## **6. DIFFERENCES, CONFLICTS AND BREACHES OF THE CODE**

6.1 Governors, student representatives, and staff members must act on the assumption that Governors, student representatives, and staff colleagues are competent and diligent in their duties until the situation demonstrates otherwise.

6.2 Differences of opinion and ways of doing things are natural within any representative organization. Pluralism and debate are positive assets to the development of the Association. Governors, student representatives, and staff members must act to achieve consensus through persuasion and discussion.

6.3 In the case of criticisms or differences of opinion within their respective groups, Governors, student representatives, and staff members should attempt to resolve the issue informally first. If criticisms or differences of opinion arise between these groups, resolution should be attempted using established channels of communication. Where problems cannot be otherwise resolved, disciplinary and appeals mechanisms are available under the By-Laws and Policies and Procedures of the Association. Under no circumstances should anyone publicly attempt to discredit another Governor, student representative, or staff member.

## **7. DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

Disciplinary investigations, reviews and actions will comply with SAMRU policies and bylaws.

