



**L A W E H**  
OPEN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

## **LAWEH ETHICS POLICY**

**Education Without Barriers**

## **Introduction**

Laweh Open University is committed to the highest ethical and professional standards of conduct in pursuit of its vision and mission to develop people abilities for global impact anytime, anywhere. Accomplishing the vision and mission demands integrity, good judgment and dedication to public service from all members of the Laweh community. While Laweh affirms each person's accountability for individual actions, it also recognizes the need for the mission and vision to be integrated into the shared values and ethical conduct to which each member of the community must be held accountable. Furthermore, Laweh acknowledges that an organizational culture grounded in trust is essential to supporting these shared values and ethical conduct. The code of conduct is not intended to be a punitive process for members, but to promote harmony, professional behavior and peaceful co-existence as members of the university community. The following Statement of shared Values and Code of Conduct are intended to build, maintain and protect that trust, recognizing that each member of Laweh community is responsible for doing his/her part by upholding the highest standards of professional competence and character.

## **Applicability**

Laweh Ethics Policy applies to all members of the university community. These shall include:

1. All members of university Board
2. All members of the Executive Board
3. All members of the university management team
4. All individuals employed by, or acting on behalf of, the institutions, including volunteers, vendors, and contractors
5. All cooperative organizations affiliated with the university
6. All students of the university

Members to which this policy is applicable shall participate in the university Ethics Policy training session, and shall certify compliance with the Policy. The Ethics Policy thus governs only official conduct performed by or on behalf of Laweh University. Violations of the Ethics

Policy may result in disciplinary action including dismissal or termination of appointment or contract depending on the category of staff or student involved.

## **Statement of Core Values**

Every member of Laweh community is required to adhere to the Statement of shared values of respect and integrity blend with the core values of Leadership Innovation, Flexibility and Entrepreneurship (LIFE). These values form and guide the daily work of the university.

- A. **Respect: To the Laweh**, it means students are entreated to have respect for oneself and others without regard to age, religion, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, ancestry, immigration status, gender identity, marital status and or disability. Also, personal integrity is expected of students in all spheres of the university life and activities both within and outside the frontiers of the University. Laweh students are required to exemplify these virtues in all their decisions, interaction and protection of both the University property and the private property of community members.
- B. **Integrity:** to Laweh means – being honest, fair, impartial and unbiased in our dealings both with and on behalf of the university.
- C. **Leadership: To the Laweh**, it means thinking and acting for success and the necessary constructive changes that enhance their quality of life within and without the university.
- D. **Innovation: To the Laweh**, it means focusing on solution oriented learning for creating, harnessing and turning ideas into solutions for constructive change in their life and community.
- E. **Flexibility: To the Laweh**, it means education, anytime, anywhere for value and success in an ethical way. The idea is to enable students retain some control over the time, place, pace and path of the students.
- F. **Entrepreneurship: To the Laweh**, it means applying their acquired knowledge to deliver value in their spheres of contact.

## **Purpose of the Code of Conduct**

The University recognizes that each member of the community attempts to live by his or her own systems of values, beliefs and ethical decision-making processes. The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to harmonize and guide members of the university community in applying the underlying values to the decisions and choices that are made in the course of everyday endeavors for or on behalf of the university.

## **Responsibilities**

The major responsibilities each party has in connection with this policy are as follows:

### ***College Dean/Vice Chancellor/ Pro-Vice Chancellor***

Ensure that department chairs and unit managers are aware of the need for complete compliance with the Statement of Ethical Conduct (see appendix A).

Report suspected violations to appropriate university personnel (see the Reporting a Violation segment of this document).

### ***Unit Manager/Department Chair***

Encourage and support efforts by employees to perform duties and responsibilities at the highest standards.

Ensure that supervisors are promoting excellence in ethical practices through periodic training and daily reinforcement.

Report suspected violations to appropriate university personnel (see the Reporting a Violation segment of this document) to protect both the alleged violator and the individual reporting a potential violation.

### ***University Audit***

Investigate alleged policy violations and determine whether a violation has occurred, and whether action is required.

### ***University Counsel***

Provide advice to individuals who believe that a violation may have occurred.

### ***You***

Conduct university-related activities according to the Statement of Ethical Conduct

### **Definitions**

These definitions apply to terms as they are used in this policy.

#### ***Abuse of Power***

Wrongful use of a position of authority to influence employees, students, colleagues, or volunteers (e.g., coercion to participate in activities or decision making in violation of laws, regulations, or policies).

#### ***Conflict of Commitment***

A situation in which an employee's additional employment or other activity, whether internal or external to the university, interferes with his or her performance in the primary appointment at the university.

#### ***Conflict of Interest***

A situation in which an individual or any of his or her family has an existing or potential financial or other material interest that impairs or might appear to impair the individual's independence and objectivity of judgment in the discharge of responsibilities to the university.

### ***Ethical Conduct***

Behavior conducted according to this policy and the university's rules and regulations

### ***Financial Irregularity***

An intentional misstatement, omission, or failure to disclose information related to financial transactions that is detrimental to the interests of the university, including embezzlement, fraud, or falsification of records to misappropriate assets.

### ***Fraud***

An intentional act of misrepresentation, dishonesty, trickery, or deceit (including the concealment or suppression of truth), designed to obtain information or assets without approval.

### ***Intellectual Property***

Property of an intellectual nature belonging to an individual or entity, including but not limited to proprietary information that is protected by a patent, copyright, or non-disclosure agreement.

### ***Kickback***

The act of accepting a payment to improperly obtain or reward with favorable treatment in connection with either a contract or subcontract relating to a prime contract.

### ***Misconduct***

Cheating, falsification, fabrication, misappropriation, plagiarism, or other practice that seriously deviates from those commonly accepted as proper.

### ***Stewardship***

The management of tangible and intangible assets of the university

## **Code of Conduct**

### **The university community members shall:**

1. Uphold the highest standards of intellectual honesty and integrity in the conduct of teaching, research, service and administration of the university.
2. Act as good agents of the resources and information entrusted to our care on behalf of the university.
3. Perform assigned duties and professional responsibilities in such a manner in furtherance the university vision and mission.
4. Treat fellow employees, students and the public with dignity and respect.
5. Refrain from discriminating against, harassing or threatening others.
6. Comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations and professional standards.
7. Respect the intellectual property rights of others.
8. Avoid improper political activities as defined in law and other statutes of the university.
9. Protect human health and safety and the environment in all Laweh operations and activities.
10. Report wrongdoing to the proper authorities; refrain from retaliating against those who do report violations; and cooperate fully with authorized investigations.
11. Disclose and avoid improper conflicts of interest.
12. Refrain from accepting any gift or thing of value in those instances prohibited by law or Board of Laweh policy.
13. Not use our position or authority improperly to advance the interests of a friend or relative or in furtherance of a personal interest to the detriment of the university – Abuse of Power
- 14.** Communicate judgments, opinions, and other information – both positive and negative – fairly and objectively.
15. Use electronic communications and systems in a responsible manner
- 16.** Use confidential information acquired in the course of relationship with the university only for official or legal purposes, and not for personal or illegal advantage, while in or out of the relationship with the University.

17. Confidential Information: Disclose confidential information acquired in the course of a relationship with the University on a need-to-know basis and only when authorized to do so.
18. Conflicts of Interest and Commitment: Advise appropriate parties of potential conflicts in accordance with applicable university conflicts policies.
19. Refrain from engaging in a romantic or sexual relationship with a student whom you teach, advise, coach, or supervise in any way.
20. Avoid any activity that hinders your ability to carry out responsibilities to the university.
21. Financial Transactions: Conduct, process, and report all financial transactions with integrity.
22. Gifts: No gifts or accommodations of any nature may be accepted by any individual when doing so could possibly place that individual in a prejudicial or embarrassing position, interfere in any way with the impartial discharge of duties to the University, or reflect adversely on that individual's integrity or that of the University.
23. Subject to this restriction, individuals may accept, with supervisory approval, modest gifts or other social amenities so long as such amenities are not extravagant under the circumstances Supervisor approval is not required for reasonable, infrequent meals.
24. Note: This restriction is not meant to cover gifts given to individuals on behalf of the university, such as an exchange of goodwill gifts.
25. Grants and Contracts: Adhere to grant and contractual obligations of the university, including proper allocation of expenses.
26. Comply with applicable laws and regulations governing the receipt and disbursement of sponsored funds.
27. Intellectual Property: Honor non-disclosure agreements.
28. Abide by all rules and laws governing the use of copyrighted materials, patented ideas, licenses, and proprietary information.
29. Refrain from any activity that constitutes infringement of individual or Laweh intellectual property

## **Interpretation and Sources**

The Statement of Core Values and Code of Conduct do not address every conceivable situation or ethical dilemma that may be faced by members of Laweh community. Members are expected to exercise good judgment absent specific guidance from this policy or other applicable laws, rules and regulations. Staff and students condition of services and handbook respectively should read in addition to the policy. Specific questions pertaining to the ethical policy should be directed to the Vice-chancellor for further explanation. There are also multiple sources of authority that address specific questions or situations and should be referred to in situations where the emphasis of the code is limited.

## **Explanatory Notes to the Code of Conduct for Research**

### **1. Uphold the highest standards of intellectual honesty and integrity in the conduct of teaching, research, service and grants administration.**

Members of Laweh community engaged in research are expected to do so in accordance with institutional, governmental and professional standards while upholding the highest standards of integrity, intellectual honesty and scholarship. Unacceptable violations of research integrity include, but are not limited to: (a) plagiarism defined as using another's ideas, writings, research, or intellectual property and representing it as your own original work, (b) falsification of data, which includes direct alteration of findings or failing to disclose data that would substantively change the research findings and (c) fabrication of research data. Research integrity requires that principal investigators and others with a fiduciary obligation for grant funds use those funds in a manner consistent with the grantor's terms and conditions and applicable laws, rules and regulations. Finally, research involving human subjects shall be conducted only after appropriate review and approval by the university and should be conducted in accordance with the research policy.

### **2. Act as good stewards of the resources and information entrusted to our care.**

Laweh property is intended for use in support of the vision and mission and legitimate public purposes based on its statutory mandate. The property shall not be used for personal

gain or purposes except for incidental personal use of email, a telephone to make a local telephone call or incidental Internet use that is not inconsistent with applicable laws and policies. However, members of the University community should note that such use must not interfere with the performance of official functions or that individual's own job performance. Additionally, members of the University community should understand that there is no expectation of privacy once any personal material is placed on a institutional system. Members of Laweh are also required to maintain the integrity and accuracy of the documents and records for which they are responsible. No employee may alter, falsify or destroy any original record or document absent valid authority to do so without compliance to the documentation policy of the university.

Laweh is the custodian of all types of information, including that which is confidential, proprietary and private. Individuals who have access to such information are expected to be familiar and to comply with applicable laws, policies, directives and agreements pertaining to access, use, protection and disclosure of such information. Computer security and privacy are also subject to law and the university policy.

**3. Perform assigned duties and professional responsibilities in such a manner so as to further the LAWEH mission.**

All members Laweh community are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of scholarship, public service and integrity. This requirement encompasses both a responsibility to understand and to further organizational missions and goals. Individuals in positions of greater authority bear a greater responsibility for achieving organizational missions and goals in an effective and efficient manner. However, all members should contribute to the success of the university in a manner consistent with their duties and responsibilities.

**4. Treat fellow employees, students and the public with dignity and respect.**

Members of Laweh community are required to maintain a professional work environment. Therefore, unprofessional conduct may result in disciplinary action. A romantic or sexual relationship between a member of Laweh Staff and a student is prohibited in those instances where the individual has the responsibility for directly supervising, evaluating, instructing, treating or otherwise overseeing the student. Romantic or sexual relationships between employees and people in positions of authority are strongly discouraged.

**5. Refrain from discriminating against, harassing or threatening others.**

Laweh frowns on discrimination on any grounds including race, color, gender, religion, creed, national origin, age, disability and status. Sexual harassment of members of the university community including students is prohibited and shall subject the offender to dismissal or other sanctions after compliance with procedural due process requirements. Unwelcome sexual advancements, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when: (A) Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic standing; or (B) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment or academic decisions affecting an individual; or (C) Such conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment. Laweh is also committed to the prevention of workplace violence and the maintenance of a respectful working environment. Laweh would not tolerate any type of workplace violence committed by or against students or members of the community. Violations of the workplace violence policy will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

**6. Comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations and professional standards.**

Compliance with laws, rules and regulations governing Laweh is both a legal and an ethical mandate. The risks associated with non-compliance can be very significant. Significant risks include loss of reputation, loss of external funding, financial penalties, loss of accreditation

and potential criminal prosecutions. It is the policy of Laweh to conduct its business in an open and transparent manner consistent with the privacy rights of members of public. Laweh shall accept grants from public or private organizations to perform as outlined in the grantor's guidelines and applicable laws, rules and regulations. The submission of false or misleading documentation in connection with a grant may result in both employment action and criminal prosecution. Members of Laweh must exercise due care and avoid any personal use of grant funds.

#### **7. Respect the intellectual property rights of others.**

The university community members associated with the production of intellectual property have the responsibility to comply with the institutional policies governing intellectual property.

University community member who use software licensed to the university must abide by applicable software license agreements and may copy licensed software only as permitted by the license. It is also the practice of the university to comply with copyright laws. This should not violate copyright laws to include publications, recordings and other electronic media. It should be noted that the © copyright notice is no longer required by law. This means that individuals copying material must take extra steps to ensure that the material is in the public domain or may be copied under the "Fair Use" doctrine.

#### **8. Avoid improper political activities as defined in law and Statutes Policy.**

Laweh community members are encouraged to participate as responsible and interested citizens in our democratic society. However, there are "political" activities that are inconsistent with the roles and responsibilities of the university employees. Employees may not participate in a political campaign which interferes with performance of official duties. Employees are restricted from holding state or community elective office and must obtain a leave of absence prior to qualifying as a candidate for elective office in a primary or general election and ending after the general or final election. Appointive offices and locally elected offices may be held by an employee if there is no conflict or interference with the employee's university duties and responsibilities.

**9. Protect human health and safety and the environment in all the university operations and activities.**

Laweh is strongly committed to protecting the environment and human health and safety in all of its operations. In working to meet this commitment, the university recognizes that proactive efforts must be made to ensure that sound environmental, health, and safety planning is integrated into every level of University System decision making. Additionally, all members of the university community bear a responsibility for protecting human health and safety and the environment in those areas for which they are responsible.

**10. Report wrongdoing to the proper authorities; refrain from retaliating against those who do report violations; and cooperate fully with authorized investigations.**

All members of the university community have a responsibility to follow the policies and procedures, adhere to applicable laws and regulations and speak up when they see or suspect misconduct. Members of Laweh community with concerns about possible unethical behavior or noncompliance are encouraged to speak to their supervisor or to use the Ethical policy. Retaliation against a member of the university community for reporting wrongdoing is strictly prohibited the policy.

Members of the community are required to cooperate fully with authorized internal investigations. Failure to cooperate may subject the individual to disciplinary action to include termination of employment or contractual relationship. Members Laweh community who are unsure as to the legitimacy of an investigation should consult a supervisor or institutional counsel.

**11. Disclose and avoid improper conflicts of interest.**

Laweh employees are expected to devote their primary efforts to the university vision and mission. Outside employment or activities must not interfere with performance of official

duties. Additionally, outside activities may create conflicts of interest or of commitment that must be properly disclosed and managed.

**12. Refrain from accepting any gift or thing of value in those instances prohibited by law or Board of Laweh policy.**

No member of Laweh community shall directly or indirectly solicit, receive, accept or agree to receive a thing of value by inducing the reasonable belief that the giving of the thing will influence his/her performance or failure to perform any official action. The acceptance of a benefit, reward or consideration where the purpose of the gift is to influence a member of Laweh community in the performance of his/her official functions is a felony under the law.

**13. Not use your position or authority improperly to advance the interests of a friend or relative.**

No member of Laweh community will use his or her position or authority improperly to advance the interests of a friend or relative. Any benefit granted to an individual will be based on merit and/or written procedure. No individual shall be employed in a department or unit which will result in the existence of a subordinate-superior relationship between such individual and any relative of such individual through any line of authority.

## **References**

Australia Open University

Franklin Open University

Tanzania Open University

University of System of Georgia (<http://www.usg.edu/audit/compliance/ethics>)

University of Professional Studies, Accra