

Teacher Education Covenant for Decision-Making

Rationale

Why do we need a code of ethics? Olsen (1998) states that a code of ethics “increases ethical sensitivity and judgment, strengthens support for individuals’ moral courage, and helps a group hone a sense of identity.” An explicitly stated code document identifies our “modus operandi”, our group commitments for decision-making, and our ethical responsibilities within the department. Such a document will help us pursue excellence, empower us to eliminate sources of bias, and ensure fairness, accuracy, and consistency in all our work.

Preamble

The concept of caring and reflective practice permeates the conceptual framework of teacher education at Eastern Mennonite University. The task of teacher educators is to ensure that candidates and the faculty who evaluate and assess them do so fairly and without bias.

Bias is an inclination of temperament, outlook, or disposition that influences decision-making and problem solving. Confirmation bias is generically defined as the tendency to place undue emphasis on information that confirms personal beliefs and attitudes and ignores or distorts information that contradicts currently held beliefs and attitudes. Bias often results in the perpetuation of unwarranted beliefs, unfairness, and discrimination.

Covenant

As a covenant to responsible decision-making, the Education Unit is committed to the following values and principles to guide our conduct with students and decision-making within its governance system.

- * We will give priority to the good of the whole and the achievement of the mission of EMU over any personal biases we hold. (Micah 6:8; Philippians 2:2; I Corinthians 12:7)
- * We will do our best to practice mutual trust and respect in thought, word, and deed, giving each other the benefit of the doubt when we believe we see inconsistencies. (Matthew 7:12; Philippians 4:8)
- * We will do our best to provide a safe place to express opinions and ideas freely without fear of being judged. (Matthew 7:1-5; James 1:19)
- * We will seek to make decisions consistent with the facts while honoring the dignity and well-being of all individuals including students, rejecting favoritism and personal bias. (Ephesians 4:2-3)
- * We will assist colleagues and co-workers in their professional development. (Ephesians 4:7)

Adapted from the Prioritization Steering Committee Covenant

*Reviewed and approved by Education Department 9/15/08
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