

CODE OF ETHICS

The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group) is an independent nonprofit in service to California's community colleges, their students, and our Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE) colleagues.

Our work is based on a commitment to student success. Each of the principles outlined in this document is designed to serve and benefit students, particularly those who have been marginalized and disproportionately impacted, and higher education professionals who are tied to and impact student success.

Purpose

The following Code of Ethics embeds in writing a common set of principles that reflects the link between the RP Group's mission, vision, and values, and the day-to-day decisions and behaviors of our staff, Board, and consultants. Moreover, we strongly encourage all IRPE professionals in our California Community Colleges (CCC) to apply these principles in service to their colleges and students. The creation of and adherence to a set of standards signals a level of professionalism to our partners and CCC stakeholders, and builds the trust as well as the positive culture necessary for progress toward common goals.

This Code of Ethics promotes the purpose of research and evaluation, which is to seek knowledge while minimizing risk and error. The Code heightens the role of inquiry and data in understanding and supporting students. Establishing the principles put forth in this Code of Ethics also supports collaboration, which stimulates dialogue between CCC researchers and other stakeholders, and encourages thoughtful responses to sensitive and important issues. It is important to note that this document is not intended to address all ethical situations nor is it a regulatory document. Rather, it is a framework designed to foster and guide ethical decision-making regardless of one's sphere of influence, while affirming our responsibility to act in an ethical manner and to value integrity in our work.

Principles



INTEGRITY & AUTHENTICITY

Our role as data stewards is one of great responsibility, ensuring trust and a positive culture of inquiry. To uphold this principle, we promise to:

- Ensure that data and data outcomes are reported honestly and fairly
- Proactively disclose any conflicts of interest, biases, and data omissions where they exist and implement accountability measures to combat them
- Maintain transparency of data reporting and collection processes, while ensuring the confidentiality and privacy rights of students and other participants
- Understand that data are not just numbers, but human stories and lives
- Keep students at the heart of all research

INCLUSIVENESS, DIVERSITY & EQUITY



Our purpose is intrinsically tied to improving education for marginalized and disproportionately impacted students. To uphold this principle, we promise to:

- Bring awareness to inequities and injustices that are exposed in data, including student experiences, outcomes, practices, policies, and structures
- Disaggregate data to examine whether outcomes are equitable across student groups
- Look beyond common student achievement metrics to examine equity in the student

experience and beyond

- Facilitate dialogues with colleagues and students to illuminate and eradicate racial injustice and inequities in both the outcomes and experiences of marginalized students
- Ensure that the nature, environment, and culture of our work encourages stakeholders to participate in meaningful ways to cultivate a diverse set of perspectives

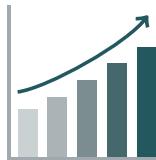
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY & COLLABORATION



Our role is to help facilitate the understanding and use of data in our collaborative efforts with others who may learn and adapt in order to better serve students. To uphold this principle, we promise to:

- Share knowledge resulting from research for the public good in a way that is meaningful, understandable, and actionable for a wide audience
- Collaborate with and engage other departments, organizations, and communities to benefit students in a multi-faceted way
- Be willing to help interpret data for others' increased understanding and implementation
- Act as an ambassador for the use of evidence-based decision making
- Ensure educators have appropriate access to data and understand data collection processes
- Remember that in order to ask others for understanding, we must practice understanding of others

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY & QUALITY



Our ability to be effective as researchers requires that we consistently put forth high-quality research and treat ourselves and others with dignity and respect. To uphold this principle, we promise to:

- Be committed to continuous learning
- Be willing to grow and adapt
- Acknowledge personal and possible group biases, position, and privilege within the context of our work
- Engage in inquiry that assumes positive intent and recognizes diverse perspectives
- Adhere to standards of high-quality research methodology — including engaging in due diligence to ensure data quality and accuracy
- Consider the audience, including their perspectives and preferred communication styles
- Recognize our responsibility to lead as experts in the fields of institutional research, planning, and effectiveness

Process

To develop this Code of Ethics, a workgroup composed of RP Group Board and staff created an initial draft that was reviewed and approved by our Board. That draft version was then shared with the IRPE community in order to solicit their feedback. The workgroup reviewed the feedback and incorporated changes into this final version that was approved by the Board on December 10, 2020. The RP Group would like to acknowledge the following organizations whose own guiding principles and standards helped in shaping our own:

- [American Educational Research Association \(AERA\)](#)
- [Association for Institutional Research \(AIR\)](#)
- [Academic Senate for California Community Colleges \(ASCCC\)](#)
- [Community College League of California \(CCLC\)](#)
- [Chief Student Services Officers Association \(CSSO\)](#)
- [The Belmont Report](#)

The Code of Ethics will be reviewed as part of the organization's strategic planning process every five years.