

## **Graduate Council Resolution on Draft *University Code of Ethics***

### **RATIONALE:**

**Whereas** the draft *University Code of Ethics* has no known author or source, including an ambiguity of descriptors;

**and whereas** the draft *University Code of Ethics* has no stipulated individuals expected to abide by it, no known intended placement or audience, nor any stipulated manner in which it would be made public to individuals expected to abide by it;

**and whereas** the relationship of the draft *University Code of Ethics* to the existing *Code of Ethics* in the SIUC Employee's handbook is unclear, in terms of whether it is to replace or supplement the existing code or to address some perceived but unstipulated problems with the existing *Code of Ethics*, and what difficulties with the existing *Code of Ethics* may have motivated the development of an additional or replacement *Code of Conduct*;

**and whereas** language such as “care, concern” mark a dramatic shift providing new avenues for grievance and discipline based on attitude and perception in addition to overt behaviors;

**and whereas** requiring decision making in the interests of an unspecified “greater good” is extremely vague, and provides no mechanism for adjudicating the sometimes incompatible interests of departments, the faculty, the administration, students, parents, the legislature, the nation, or humanity in general, and thus threatens severe sanctions for failure to address some unstipulated party's “greater good” without any means of determining what this undefined aim might perchance be;

**and whereas** we “must” meet the expectations of “those we serve,” yet it is unclear and unspecified which groups' expectations we must meet and how we are to know the expectations of various groups. In addition, this requirement requires us to meet even unreasonable expectations of parents, students, or legislators, and it provides an avenue for a direct breach of academic freedom, should faculty choose to teach controversial material or do research in controversial areas that might be counter to the “expectations” of parents or legislators;

**and whereas** employees are “required” to report “any” violation of the expectations laid out in the draft *Code of Ethics*, including violations of attitude and thought as well as deed, including the exercise of academic freedom in classroom and research, we fear that a “grievance machine” will be constructed, allowing many behaviors and much speech to be determined ambiguously ethical. Of greatest concern is that this would provide a wide-open back door to consideration of issues of collegiality in tenure, promotion, and the continued employment of individuals, where perceptions of behavior or conversation could be declared uncivil, uncooperative, or uncaring, and thus open to charges of unethical behavior;

**and whereas** the draft *Code of Ethics* requires all potential breaches to be immediately brought to the attention of the higher administrative offices of the university, which we suspect would lead to even minor infractions ending up at the desk of the President on a routine basis;

**and whereas** many aspects of ethical behavior are also covered clearly in the draft *Code of Conduct*, but in a more focused manner that addresses behaviors not intent or attitudes, as well as in the existing SIUC *Code of Ethics*,

**and whereas** the draft *Code of Ethics* appears to require an unattainable standard of perfection and self-sacrifice in attitude and behavior and to demand reporting of any deviance from this standard to the administration, it has the potential to lead to widespread differences in application and the abusive singling out of particular individuals for targeting as “unethical” under trumped up and minor infractions

**RESOLUTION:**

**Be it resolved that, in light of our very serious concerns with the language and meaning in the document and lack of information on its source or intended use,** the Graduate Council does not support or endorse this draft *University Code of Ethics* in its current form.