

Criterion Five

Cottey College demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships.

Integrity in Practices and Relationships

Cottey has in place policies and procedures that demonstrate its commitment to integrity in its practices and relationships. The College abides by both the ethical standards commonly accepted by the higher education community and the civil laws governing its relationships and practices. Chapter 16 will document that Cottey has developed, stated in printed material, and distributed widely, policies and procedures that govern ethical behavior. This chapter will also discuss that the College takes care to present an accurate and consistent image in its publications, and that the College demonstrates integrity in its relationships.

Faculty, Staff, and Student Handbooks

The standards, policies, and procedures that guide the activities of the faculty, staff, and students, as well as relationships within the Cottey community, are outlined in the handbooks developed for each of these groups. The Faculty Handbook was revised in 1995; the Cottey College Manual for

Administrative Staff was revised in 1999, and the Cottey College Manual for Hourly Employees was also revised in 1999. Employees receive copies of the appropriate handbook or manual and the Cottey College Employee Policy and Procedures Manual that was revised in 2002. Employees are expected to acquaint themselves fully with the content of the manuals, including policies on health and safety, drugs and alcohol, sexual harassment, conflict of interest, and, in most cases, discrimination. Along with the pertinent handbook and/or manual, new employees also receive a copy of the mission and goals, emphasizing its importance to all members of the College community.

Disciplinary and grievance procedures for violations of these policies are described in full in the respective handbooks. The Faculty Handbook does not include the College's statement of nondiscrimination or the listing of the coordinator for equal opportunity. In addition, proper indices would improve the Faculty Handbook and the Cottey College Employee Policy and Procedures Manual.

The board of trustees also uses a Policies and Procedures Manual (revised in 1998) and a Handbook for New Trustees developed in 2000. These outline the composition of the board and the expectations for each trustee in executing his or her duties to the College. The Cottey Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of Cottey Junior College elaborate on these duties and other policies specific to the board.

Nondiscrimination Policies and Practices

Remaining firm in its resolve to eliminate discrimination and biases in its practices is especially important to Cottey as a women's institution with a geographically and internationally diverse student body.

Cottey has admission policies, practices, and recruitment goals that are consistent with the College's mission and appropriate to its educational programs. Article XI of the Cottey Articles of Incorporation states that the

board of trustees "reaffirms its standing policy of admitting students without regard to race, color, creed, and national or ethnic origin." This message is consistent with the admission and financial aid section of the Cottey College Catalog--which also adds "physical handicap"--and the 2000-02 Cottey College Student Handbook, as well as the Cottey fact sheet, which is widely disseminated to internal and external constituents.

Two areas where policies concerning nondiscrimination in admission could be more strongly emphasized are the Web site and the P.E.O. and Alumnae Recruitment Handbook. Any P.E.O., alumnae, parent, or other interested constituent with Internet access can obtain information from the Web site to pass on to prospective students. Likewise, the recruitment handbook is distributed free of charge to any alumnae or P.E.O. who is representing the College during a college fair, student gathering, or counselor visit. Including Cottey's nondiscrimination policies in these publications would serve to better educate those who use them.

Cottey's status as an equal opportunity employer appears in all printed job announcements. Human Resources is responsible for employee supervision and discrimination training to ensure that the personnel policies and practices are administered without regard to any individual's race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, citizenship, disability, or veteran status.

Publications

Ensuring that institutional publications, statements, and advertising accurately and fairly describe Cottey and its operation while effectively accomplishing their purpose is central to the College's integrity. The Office of Public Information reviews all press releases, advertisements, externally produced publications, and documents printed on campus to check for accuracy and a consistent message. This office also produces the Cottey Styleguide, which contains the major style and usage rules the College follows. Revised in 1999, each administrative department on campus receives

a copy. It is available to faculty through their secretary. The Cottey College Catalog, which is updated every two years, contains information on the academic program, courses and curricula, academic policies, and other academic and admission information.

Americans With Disabilities Act

The College adheres to applicable standards of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA). Adaptations in facilities, grounds, and campus services to permit access for students, faculty, staff, and visitors are made on an as-needed basis. One such example is the purchase of an electronic lift to provide access to the swimming pool.

The advisement coordinator serves as coordinator of student disability services. She works with the director of housing and the director of the physical plant to meet students needs for special accommodations with regard to housing and facilities access, and with the faculty to arrange academic accommodations for students with documented needs.

Intercollegiate Athletics

Cottey is a Division II school in Region XVI of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). Members of the Cottey Comets intercollegiate volleyball and basketball teams follow NJCAA's rules and regulations in their games as well as in their social conduct. The College screens players for eligibility and follows all applicable association guidelines for the awarding of scholarship funds. The sports teams are not self-sustaining but are funded through the College's annual budget.

Contractual Agreements

The College does not have contractual agreements to provide educational or research service to government, industry, or other organizations. Other types of contracts are reviewed by the chief financial officer.

Relationships With Other Institutions

Cottey belongs to the Nevada TeleCenter, one of ten sites across the state of Missouri managed by University Outreach and Extension that offers courses via video-conference technology. In addition to Cottey, partners include Crowder College, Missouri Southern State College, the Nevada R-5 School District, the Nevada Area Economic Development Corporation, the Missouri National Guard, Southwest Missouri State University, and the University of Missouri-Kansas City. As a partner, Cottey provides support through dues and free use of Cottey's Library to any student taking classes through the TeleCenter.

In addition, Cottey has a library resource sharing agreement with Crowder College, Neosho, Missouri. Crowder operates a site in Nevada, Missouri, at the TeleCenter. Crowder wants to offer the full program for an Associate in Arts degree in elementary and secondary education at its Nevada site, but is concerned about providing students at that site with enough library resources to satisfy the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education program approval process. The director of the library and Cottey's Crowder liaison work closely with the Crowder teacher education faculty to ensure that Cottey's Library has adequate resources for Nevada students. The Crowder College students use the Library at Cottey at no charge. The College's agreement with Crowder also allows Cottey students to enroll in the associate level teacher education courses Crowder offers in Nevada at no charge.

Cottey's Library also agrees to share resources with 50 academic libraries in the state through its membership agreement with MOBIUS.

Community Relations

Cottey is one of Nevada's major employers and is an active participant in the Nevada-Vernon County Chamber of Commerce. Faculty, staff, and students volunteer in many civic and human service organizations. (A list of

employee community service activities is available in the Resource Room.) The College is ethical in its relationships with local businesses and service providers.

The President has initiated two committees that involve members of the surrounding community with the College--the Cottey-Nevada Community Relations Committee and the Diversity Concerns Committee. The former involves Cottey students and personnel with community members working together to solve problems that might arise between the two groups. One very successful result of this committee's efforts is a picnic organized by community leaders to welcome Cottey students and their families in August each year. The Diversity Concerns Committee, established in July 2000, brings together representatives from Cottey (faculty, staff, and students) with community members to address creating a climate of tolerance, equality, and fairness in Nevada and Vernon County. The goal of the committee is to provide programs that build a community atmosphere of mutual respect so that people of diverse backgrounds can live and work together.

Federal Compliance

As set forth in the Handbook of Accreditation (Second Edition), Cottey addresses the following HLC policies regarding federal compliance.

I.A.5. Title IV Programs

Cottey participates in several Title IV Programs, including Federal Pell grant, Federal SEOG grant, Federal College Workstudy, and Federal Family Education Loan Program. Cottey's cohort default rate in the Federal Family Education Loan Program was 4.7 percent in 2000, the most recent year that the Department of Education has determined the rate. The following table illustrates the cohort default rates since 1993.

Table 16.1 - Official Cohort Default Rates by Fiscal Year

Year	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Rate	0.0%	2.1%	6.9%	5.5%	0.9%	3.8%	2.5%	4.7%

I.C.9. Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

Cottery uses semester credit hours as the basic measure for all courses. The College's transcript reflects the recommendations in the *Academic Records and Transcript Guide* published by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

Tuition and fees are found in the Catalog on page 78. There is no program-specific tuition.

III.A.1. Professional Accreditation

Cottery has maintained accreditation with the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) since 1956. The last review of the music program by the NASM Commission on Junior Colleges was in the fall of 2000. Cottery received a good standing rating from NASM with the stipulation that the institution provide evidence of a published mission for the music department. This stipulation has been met.

IV.B.2. Advertising and Recruitment Materials

Accurate information on the College's programs is publicized through a variety of materials. Publications that include reference to Cottery's affiliation with the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools are not consistent in listing the address and telephone number of the HLC. Neither the address nor the telephone number is published in the viewbook or the Cottery fact sheet. The address of the HLC is published in the Catalog, but not the phone number. Cottery's Web site reference to its affiliation with the HLC includes both the address and the phone number on the Academic Programs page.

IV.B.4. Record of Student Complaints

A log of formal, written student complaints filed with the offices of the President, the VPAA, or the dean of student life is maintained in each of these offices. The log contains the date the complaint was submitted, the nature of the complaint, and the steps taken to resolve it.

Third Party Comment

The Self-Study Steering Committee gave careful consideration to identifying the following public constituencies from which to seek third party comment: P.E.O.s, alumnae, donors, current students, Nevada/Vernon County residents, prospective and current students, and faculty and staff. A notice inviting third-party comment about Cottey College was placed in the following publications:

The P.E.O. Record (January/February 2003 issue)
The Viewpoint (alumnae publication, winter issue)
The Spectrum (student newspaper, January 2003 issue)
The Nevada Daily Mail (local newspaper, January 12, 2003, edition)
The Vernon County Times (local newspaper, January 16, 2003, edition)
The Cottey Chronicle (internal weekly newsletter, January 17, 2003, issue)

A notice was also placed on the College's Web site on January 22, 2003. The text of the notice is as follows:

Cottey College is seeking comments from its constituencies in preparation for a periodic evaluation by its regional accrediting agency. The College will undergo a comprehensive evaluation visit April 28-30, 2003, by a team representing The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Cottey College has been accredited by The Higher Learning Commission since 1941. The team will review Cottey's continuing ability to meet the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation and the General Institutional Requirements.

The public is invited to submit comments in writing regarding the College:

Public Comment on Cottey College

The Higher Learning Commission

30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400

Chicago, IL 60602

<http://www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org/thirdparty/thirdparty.html>

Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of Cottey College or its academic programs. Comments must be in writing and signed; comments cannot be treated as confidential.

All comments must be received by March 28, 2003.

Safety and Security

The College annually prints a brochure titled, "A Commitment to Your Safety," prepared in compliance with the Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act of 1990. It includes a report of crimes occurring on campus for the previous three academic years. The brochure also lists emergency procedures, contact numbers, and other community resources as well as the College policy on alcohol and drugs. (A copy of the brochure is available in the Resource Room.)

Conclusion for Criterion Five

Cotley demonstrates integrity in its policies, procedures, and practices. The College works cooperatively in its relationships with businesses, the surrounding community, and other educational institutions. The College also complies with HLC policies regarding federal compliance. This chapter demonstrates that Cotley meets Criterion 5.

Strengths

- The Honor Code formally expresses Cotley's commitment to ethical and moral principles.
- Standards, policies, and procedures are outlined in handbooks and manuals that are distributed to all members of the Cotley community.

Concerns

- The statement of nondiscrimination and the listing of the equal opportunity coordinator are not in the Faculty Handbook.

Issues for the Future

- Add a statement of nondiscrimination and list the equal opportunity coordinator in the Faculty Handbook.

Summary and Request for Accreditation

Cottey is a dynamic college, that has made progress in the last ten years. The College has a rich heritage, and continues to pursue Virginia Alice Cottey's vision of educating women. Cottey will continue to thrive in the decade ahead with the commitment of an excellent faculty and staff, the financial stability of the institution, and the support of the P.E.O. Sisterhood. This Self-Study Report presents evidence that Cottey fulfills the five criteria for accreditation set forth by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. It also documents that the College meets the General Institutional Requirements.

Cottey College requests continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association for a period of ten years.