

TITLE: WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY	
APPROVED: October 4, 2010	REVIEWED:
NEXT REVIEW: 2013-2014	
RESPONSIBILITY: Vice-President, Administration/Executive Director, Human Resources	
APPENDICES:	
CROSS-REFERENCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Code of Ethics Policy▪ Fraud Policy▪ GPRC Mission, Vision and Values	

POLICY STATEMENT:

Grande Prairie Regional College (GPRC) is committed to its core values including integrity and accountability. Specifically, GPRC is fiscally accountable, and adheres to the highest standards of professionalism through fair and ethical behavior. GPRC takes gross misconduct very seriously, whether it is committed by senior administrators, faculty, staff, students, suppliers or contractors.

PURPOSE:

To ensure GPRC employees maintain the highest core values of integrity and accountability, and to provide employees with an avenue in which to report their concerns without fear of repercussion.

SCOPE:

All senior administrators, faculty, staff, students, suppliers and contractors of GPRC.

DEFINITIONS:

Whistleblowing: Reporting possible gross misconduct, without fear of reprisal.

PROCEDURE/GUIDELINES:

1. GROSS MISCONDUCT

It is impossible to provide an exhaustive list of the activities that constitute gross misconduct. However, the following is a partial list of the actions GPRC would expect employees to report:

- Contravention of GPRC values, Code of Ethics or other policies and/or relevant laws
- Misuse of public funds, assets or resources
- Gross mismanagement
- Actions or omissions which endanger the health or safety of employees, students, the community or the environment
- An act of reprisal
- Actions which are intended to conceal any of the above

It will not always be clear that a particular action constitutes gross misconduct and complainants will need to use their own judgment.

If a complainant makes a report in good faith their concern will be valued and appreciated, they will not be blamed for speaking up, liable for disciplinary action, or at risk of losing their job, even if the concern is not confirmed by any subsequent investigation.

GPRC is committed to maintaining its core values, including respect, and is serious about holding senior administrators, faculty, staff, students, suppliers and contractors to the applicable standards of conduct.

If a complainant knowingly and maliciously makes a false report, they may face disciplinary action.

2. PROCESS ADVICE

If a complainant is unsure whether to use this procedure or if they want advice at any stage, they may contact the Human Resources Department. Human Resources can also provide referrals to other resources or advice on legal protection.

3. EXTERNAL CONTACTS

GPRC recognizes that there may be circumstances where it may be appropriate for the complainant to report their concerns to an outside body. The Executive Director, Human Resources is able to provide advice on such an option.

4. PROOF OF WRONGDOING

GPRC expects the complainant to furnish reasonable evidence of any gross misconduct that they report.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY

GPRC will make every reasonable effort to keep the complainant's identity anonymous, in accordance with their direction. However, there may be circumstances where they may be needed as a witness, for example if the report becomes the subject of a fraud investigation. Should this be the case, the complainant will be advised by Human Resources.

The principle will always be to involve as few people as possible, on a need-to-know basis.

6. WHISTLEBLOWING DUE PROCESS

6.1. Reporting Process

Complainants can make a report verbally, in writing, or by email. Concerns would normally be raised internally to the Vice-President, Administration or the Executive Director, Human Resources. Which of these individuals is more appropriate will depend on the seriousness of the gross misconduct and who the complainant believes is involved in it.

Concerns regarding gross misconduct by Senior Administrators should be reported directly to the President.

Concerns regarding gross misconduct by the President should be reported to the Chair, Board of Governors. If the complainant wishes, the Executive Director, Human Resources can report it to the Chair, Board of Governors on behalf of the complainant.

GPRC strongly advises that before reporting a concern externally, the complainant seek advice from Human Resources. GPRC will fully cooperate with investigations by appropriate legal and/or judicial authorities.

6.2. Receiving Reports of Gross Misconduct

The individual(s) receiving a report of gross misconduct will advise the complainant that their concern is valued and appreciated, and will make every effort to ensure the complainant's confidentiality is respected and they are protected from reprisal.

The individual receiving the report will ask the complainant the reason(s) for their concern and will require the complainant to provide as much information as they can.

They will also advise the complainant of anyone else who needs to be contacted in order to conduct an investigation. The report will be immediately communicated to the President, the Vice-President, Administration, and the Executive Director, Human Resources unless their involvement is not appropriate. Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality.

6.3. Investigating Reports of Gross Misconduct

There are, of course, two perspectives on any issue and GPRC will need to make preliminary inquiries to determine whether an investigation is appropriate and what form it will take. All concerns raised under this policy will be followed up and documented in writing.

Within five (5) working days of receiving a report, the individual receiving the report will acknowledge receipt of the concern in writing, and provide information on who will deal with the matter and who to talk to if there are any questions. Investigations



may take some time in order to ensure the matter is properly and fully addressed. The complainant will be given feedback on how the matter is proceeding and, where possible, the outcome of the investigation.

7. RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED

Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE), Academic Staff Association (ASA) and Employees' Association (EA) members are entitled to be accompanied by their union steward or association representative, if they choose. Administrative Group members may request that they be accompanied by a fellow Administrative Group member. Employees who do not fall under these categories may request that they be accompanied by a fellow GPRC employee.

The person accompanying the complainant will act in the interest of the complainant, and also act in a supportive nature to ensure the process is fair and that all parties are providing clear and correct information. They should not answer questions on behalf of the complainant.