Civility Counts
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The Oxford English Dictionary (2nd edition)

Definition of civility:
1) connected with citizenship, a community of citizens collectively;
2) behavior proper to the intercourse of civilized people;
3) ordinary courtesy or politeness, as opposed to rudeness of behavior;
4) decent respect, consideration;
5) an act or expression of politeness;
6) decency, seemliness.
WASC Accreditation Standard II:
Student Learning Programs & Services

3C. A recognition of what it means to be an ethical human being and effective citizen: qualities include an appreciation of ethical principles; civility and interpersonal skills; respect for cultural diversity; historical and aesthetic sensitivity; and the willingness to assume civic, political, and social responsibilities locally, nationally, and globally.
Civility: Civic Virtue and Ethical Principle

- Civility as a civic virtue associated with politeness, good manners and rectitude.
- Civility as an ethical principle underlies respect for persons and for the foundation of a civil state.

How and why does one person respect another?

What are the responsibilities of an individual in the shared public sphere?
60 seconds of Philosophy 101

- Divine Command; Natural Law
- Hobbes
- Rousseau’s Social Contract
- Kant
- Communication Theory
Why Civility for the District?

- Ethical reasons
- Model for respect of different traditions and of diversity
- Cornerstone of a deliberative democracy
- Civility and civil discourse promote and are conducive to learning.
- Assists with retention
- Job preparation skill for students
- Contributes to harmonious interactions among all segments of the college and district
Orientation for New Students, Faculty and Staff: Model Civility from the Start

- Encourage a culture of civility.
- Students who are made to feel comfortable are more willing to participate in college activities and in classroom discussion and learning -- and will integrate more successfully into the activities of the college.
- New staff will be better integrated knowing elements of the college. Sustain a mentor program.

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Incorporate Civility Into Campus Activities

- Encourage student organizations to create events & invite speakers with a component of civil discourse.

- Model civility in workplace and classroom.
SJCC Study: Students Rate Class Members on their Civility

Student speakers: *(selected from rating sheet)*

- summarize ideas of previous student speaker
- use neutral or positive tone of voice
- exhibit neutral facial expression (i.e., no “eye rolling”)
- focus on issues not persons
- support points with reasons
- take turns to avoid interruptions
- use respectful words and strategies (i.e., “Please clarify,” “I’m unclear about,” “I disagree because,” “In other words, you are saying”)
- indicate understanding of another’s ideas even if they disagree

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Nurture an atmosphere where all members of the college community are treated with respect and civility.

*San Jose Evergreen Community College District is committed to having an inclusive college and district community where all members are treated with dignity and respect.*

- Solid connection between community and civility; schools are an environment for social skills training, problem-solving, conflict resolution, and community service for students -- and all segments.

- The *Griot*
SJCC Classified Staff Focus Group

- Do you think you are treated differently from others on campus by others?

- What strategies do you employ for encouraging civility/respect/empathy in those seeking your assistance?

- What strategies do you employ when dealing with uncivil or rude students (or others)?

- Are there any physical characteristics of your surroundings that might encourage civility/respect/empathy?

- How best can you share knowledge of helpful strategies with other staff members?
Choosing Civility: The 25 Rules of Considerate Conduct P.M. Forni

Nine Selected Rules:

- **Pay attention** – “to attend to” Others may need words of encouragement – only if you notice. Being in the present.

- **Think the Best** – Approach others as good, honest and we encourage that very behavior.
Selected Rules, con’t

- **Listen** – Word from (Anglo-Saxon) HLYSTA (Hearing) and HLOSNIAN (Wait in suspense)
  So, hearing what the other person says with suspenseful waiting; therefore *involvement*.

  Plan to listen with undivided attention; show that you are listening.
Selected Rules, con’t

- **Be Inclusive** - of gender, race, age, able-bodiedness, sexual orientation, rank. No selective conferral of respect.

  Maya Angelou said that a person may forget what you said or what you did but *never* how you made them feel.
Selected Rules, con’t

- **Speak Kindly** – The heart of civil behavior. Improve the lives of those around you and you keep them in mind. You will inspire others to do the same.
Selected Rules, con’t

- **Don’t speak ill** – High praise: “I’ve never heard her/him say a mean word about anyone.”

- **Accept and give praise** – don’t assume others know they did a good job. Compliments are sincere and thoughtful. Accept praise, too, or it’s like returning a present you didn’t like.
Selected Rules, con’t

- **Respect others’ opinions** – part of respect for another human being and requires sensitivity, tolerance, fairness, generosity.

  One doesn’t have to agree or to be untrue to one’s own thoughts in civil discussion with others; the other person is entitled to see the world differently.
THIS IS THE BEST PLAN IN THE WORLD, AND ANYONE WHO DISAGREES IS AN IGNORANT NUISANCE.

NOW I'LL OPEN IT UP FOR COMMENTS. ANYONE? ANYONE?

I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR SHORTENING THIS MEETING.
Selected Rules, con’t

- Apologize earnestly and thoughtfully - empathy is the core, expressing regret for hurting someone’s feelings.
Scenario for Discussion

- A student who has a very distinct point of view and is intolerant of the opinion of others, demands immediate service from a staff member. The staff person to whom the comments are addressed uses body language (eye rolling, turning away, loud sighs) to indicate displeasure while providing an answer.

- What are the issues? How is this best resolved using civility?

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Homework

Listen to and speak to someone you don’t like.

Take them to coffee.
Adopt Formal Statement on Civility

What should be included?

- Broad aspirational language that does not restrict protected speech
- Definition of Purpose: i.e., acceptance, tolerance, openness, respect, dignity, understanding
- Rights and Responsibilities
- Examples of unacceptable actions
- How to report or air grievances

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Model Civility Statements

- **Jamestown Community College** in New York outlines in its civility statement student rights, and focuses upon desirable and undesirable classroom behavior. The civility statement of **Bloomfield College**, an independent four-year college in New Jersey, encompasses human dignity and explicitly cites protected minorities and forbidden behaviors. The **Campus Civility Statement of Coe College**, an independent four-year institution in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, was written by students and is oriented to community-building. The **University of California-Davis** has a civility statement that it calls “Principles of Community,” a title that illustrates the interrelatedness of citizenship and civility. **University of Chicago** – connects diversity, civility, equity. Purpose: to foster an environment of acceptance, respect openness, strive for understanding.
Recommendations

College-wide

- Administer a college-wide campus climate survey periodically in order to evaluate campus attitudes on an ongoing basis.
- Review campus publications for language that encourages civility.
- Create a compendium of "best campus practices" suggested by all that encourage civility.
- Create a place where thoughts, data, material may be collected (i.e., eportfolio, internal portal).
Recommendations

- District-wide

Create and sustain a mentor program for new staff members.

Offer periodic staff training to those who have initial and/or frequent contact with students, to revitalize and maintain civil practices on campus.

Encourage the district’s professional and student organizations to treat the topic of civility.

Post signs in public areas defining mutual respect and civility.

Recognize contributions by staff and students to the district and to the community.

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