



# HIGHER EDUCATION CONSULTANTS ASSOCIATION

## STANDARDS AND ETHICS

WWW.HECAONLINE.ORG

### HECA MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Higher Education Consultants Association is to support independent education consultants as they work with students and parents during the transition into higher education by providing professional development, advancing ethical standards of conduct and promoting equity and access to higher education for all students.

### CORE VALUES OF HECA

*SOUND ADVICE* • *INTEGRITY* • *RESPECT* • *CONFIDENTIALITY*

It is expected that members of the Higher Education Consultants Association will uphold the following Statement of Standards and Ethics as they conduct their practice.

### STATEMENT OF STANDARDS AND ETHICS

As a professional community, we members of the Higher Education Consultants Association will hold ourselves and each other accountable for upholding the HECA Statement of Standards and Ethics as we conduct our practices.

HECA members pledge to act in accordance with the following Principles and Standards:

#### ***I. HECA STANDARDS FOR WORKING WITH STUDENTS AND FAMILIES***

*HECA members:*

- A.** Serve the interests of students and families by providing accurate, unbiased information about the college planning and decision-making processes.
- B.** Respect issues of confidentiality and students' rights to privacy throughout the process. Confidential information is shared with others only with the written consent of the student and/or family.
- C.** Respect the values and expectations of students and families while presenting professional advice that is sound, honest, and candid.
- D.** Respect the college planning and decision-making processes as learning opportunities for the student and family. In this spirit, the HECA member counsels and advises in the college research process, provides guidance, direction and review, but does not complete or submit a college application on behalf of a student.
- E.** Provide information to students and families that is:
  - 1.** Accurate and timely, and is based on research, college visits, participation in professional organizations and attendance at national and regional educational
  - 2.** Based on evaluation of the student's academic record, standardized tests, interests, activities, future plans, and family circumstances.
- F.** Counsel and encourage students and parents to approach the college application and admission process ethically and honestly.
- G.** Advise students and families of the importance to take responsibility for understanding the policies, requirements, and timeliness in meeting deadlines for each college to which they apply.

## **II. HECA STANDARDS WITH RESPECT TO RELATIONS WITH HIGH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES HECA MEMBERS:**

- A.** Respect the procedures and requirements of the student's high school and prospective colleges. Seek to complement the work of high school counselors and to work cooperatively and collaboratively.
- B.** Neither solicit nor accept remuneration, gifts, services, or rewards from any institution, agency or organization for the placement or recruitment of students. To do so is considered outside the realm of ethical behavior. This policy is not intended to apply to gifts of nominal value, nor to fly-ins or campus visits which are considered a beneficial part of the consultant's education.

## **III. HECA STANDARDS WITH RESPECT TO RELATIONS WITH VENDORS**

*HECA members:*

- A.** May not receive commissions of any amount. However, HECA encourages vendors to offer discounts and/or scholarships to clients of HECA members.
- B.** Vendor-sponsored counselor meetings are acceptable for professional development of HECA members.

## **IV. STANDARDS FOR THE EDUCATION CONSULTANT PROFESSION**

*HECA members shall:*

- A.** Acknowledge one's own limits in terms of knowledge, experience, and expertise and make referrals, as appropriate.
- B.** Accurately, and with integrity, represent and promote their services in writing, including statements of fees and payments.
- C.** Agree that promise or guarantee of college and/or university placement is beyond the scope of an education consultant and may not be communicated or inferred from written or verbal statements made by a HECA member.
- D.** Avoid conflict of interest or the perception thereof. It is incumbent on the HECA member to acknowledge the source and scope of such conflict. The client is thus given the opportunity to proceed or end the relationship.
- E.** HECA members adhere to and uphold the standards and ethics of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) Statement of Principles of Good Practice with particular attention to the Mandatory Practices and Best Practices sections.

## **V. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS**

*HECA members shall:*

- A.** Act professionally, responsibly, and ethically in all relationships with students, families, high schools, college admission personnel, and colleagues.
- B.** Recognize the importance of confidentiality in performing their work.
- C.** Act with integrity, respect, courtesy and thoughtfulness in all transactions.