

Guiding Principles of Ethical Practice

Adopted by NSEE Professional Development Committee, October 30, 2009

Introduction:

The National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE) is an open and pluralistic society of individuals and institutions dedicated to mutual learning and support across the varied roles and responsibilities represented in the field of experiential education. Founded in 1971, the mission of NSEE is to foster the effective use of experience as an integral part of education in order to empower learners and promote the common good. In fulfilling this mission, the Society works to advocate for the use of experiential learning throughout the educational system; to disseminate principles of best practices and innovations in the field; to encourage the development of research and theory related to experiential learning; to support the growth and leadership of experiential educators; and to create partnerships with the community.

Since the founding of the Society, the Board of Directors, staff, and membership have been governed by policies and practices that guide ethical actions, relationships, and decisions. The distinctive purposes and conditions of experiential learning demand that all those involved in the process of learning through experience are held to the highest standards of mutual respect and responsibility, and that ethical behavior is understood and practiced at every level of the learning process. Experiential educators recognize their responsibility to the student, the community, and the learning process, and are informed and guided by the *NSEE Principles of Best Practices (1998, 2009*

), as well as ethical principles such as beneficence and justice as promulgated by the *Statement of Shared Ethical Principles* (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education).

Furthermore, experiential educators are guided in their research, teaching, and practice by the ethical documents of their professional disciplines and the mission and values of their respective institutions. In addition, NSEE recognizes and embraces the following ethical statements that have special resonance for experiential educators: *Commitments to the Student*

and to the Profession

(National Education Association);

Statement on Professional Ethics

(American Association of University Professors); and

Code of Ethics for Education Abroad

(Forum on Education Abroad).

The above documents along with members and friends of NSEE have contributed to the following *NSEE Guiding Principles of Ethical Practice*:

Principle One: Experiential educators uphold the principles of engaged education and democratic societies, the pursuit of truth, and the freedom of students to express their viewpoints, engage in critical thinking, and develop habits of reflection and civil discourse, listening and learning from those whose experiences and values differ from their own.

Principle Two: Experiential educators use recognized, quality standards and practices in the placement and supervision of students engaged in field-based learning experiences and in the creation and maintenance of ethical partnerships with the communities and organizations that host and support these students, maintaining privacy, confidentiality and reciprocity throughout.

Principle Three: Experiential educators recognize the depth of responsibility in teaching and modeling the values, skills, and relationships that foster a spirit of inquiry and fairness without discrimination or disempowerment.

Principle Four: Experiential educators are informed and guided by a body of knowledge, research and pedagogical practices recognized by and specific to the field of experiential education, including reflection, self-authorship, assessment and evaluation, civic engagement, and the development of personal and social responsibility.

Principle Five: Experiential educators are committed to excellence through active scholarship, assessment and instruction, and the creation of shared knowledge and understanding through affiliation with networks and organizations that advance experiential learning.

Principle Six: Experiential educators create informed learning contexts that foster student growth and actualization of potential, achieve academic and civic goals, and reflect excellence in curriculum design and quality.

Principle Seven: Experiential educators are aware of and sensitive to recognized legal, ethical and professional issues germane to the field of experiential education and act in accordance with established guidelines to ensure appropriate practice, for example, *NSEE Principles of Best Practices* (1998, 2009).