Student Entrepreneurialism Policy

Policy/Procedure

Introduction

On June 15, 2005 a group of eleven administrators and faculty members met to discuss student entrepreneurial ventures. The discussion was sparked by efforts over the last few years of some students to launch independent business ventures with varying degrees of support from the College. After a thorough discussion, the group concluded that Dickinson is committed to the educational process involved in preparing students for business opportunities through classwork, independent study, and internships, but College resources will not be used to support the actual creation and development of businesses by students.

Students who wish to operate businesses while enrolled at Dickinson College are subject to all College policies related to such activities (see below). As a service, the College will advise students who wish to operate businesses to contact local governmental and community organizations that work with startup enterprises. This position is consistent with the collective message of existing institutional policies relating to student entrepreneurial activity.

Existing Policies Related to Student Entrepreneurial Activity


"Students may not conduct or solicit business in College housing. This includes using your computer network access to conduct business through your computer."

2. Student Handbook, Deliveries and Solicitation.

"For the safety and privacy of all residents, solicitors, peddlers and door-to-door solicitation are not permitted in the residence halls. Individuals are not permitted to raise funds or sell products in the residence halls. No deliveries are to be made to your individual room. You should direct all delivery personnel to meet you at the main entrance to your residence hall, suite or apartment building."

3. Student Handbook, Use of College Name, Marks, Logos and Seals.

"The name "Dickinson College" is synonymous with high quality education and is a valuable asset of this institution. The use of the College's name or other College marks, logos or seals, in whole or in part, by unauthorized individuals, clubs and organizations is prohibited. Those clubs or organizations [that] are recognized by the College and [that] are in good standing are extended the privilege of affiliation with the College name and its marks, logos or seals in association with their club or organization subject to the College's unlimited right to prevent or"
stop any such uses which causes [sic], or has [sic] the potential to cause, injury to the reputation of Dickinson College or which violated other existing regulations or prohibitions."

NOTE: There is room for further improvement of this provision. As it currently reads, this provision it quite broad and extends automatically certain trademark privileges to clubs and organizations which should be made on a case-by-case basis. For example, the seal should NEVER be used by any organization. Further, each proposed use of any College mark should be separately reviewed before the institution’s approval for its use is granted.


In pertinent part, the policy reads as follows:

"...Personal computer use is permitted provided that such use ... does not affect productivity, quality or service to students and others whom we serve."

"...Personal computer use is permitted provided that such use ... does not directly or indirectly interfere with the College's operation or electronic mail services, computing capacity or network capacity."

"Employees and students are prohibited from using College-owned computers and/or College-provided computer/network services to ... run a personal business."

Commentary

These policies do not preclude faculty from working with students, either as part of class assignments or as independent study, in the initiation of business ventures for educational purposes. We heard, however, from faculty at our meeting that the actual operation of businesses as part of the educational mission of Dickinson does not occur. Students may engage in the preparation of business plans and even perhaps the early phases of capitalizing proposed opportunities. Faculty members do not, however, have the time or resources to supervise business operational activities.

Institutionally, LIS does not have the time or resources to maintain student web pages intended for business purposes or to ensure that such pages are current and in compliance with applicable College standards. Further, faculty indicated in our meeting that they do not have expertise in every type of business enterprise a student might seek to initiate to adequately supervise such endeavors. Actual participation in business activities occurs through internships under the direct supervision of individuals and enterprises with experience in the field and that are actually involved in business ventures. Finally, when the use of the College’s name is associated with student business activities, questions of oversight of the business in order to protect the integrity of the College’s marks arise. The consequences to the College for poorly run businesses or businesses that terminate abruptly upon graduation of student entrepreneurs create additional concerns for the College.

The clarity of the College’s position on this issue remains an issue of communication both among faculty and administrators, as well as students, so that the future entrepreneurs among
Dickinson's student body understand that faculty will not supervise the operation of student businesses run from the College. Even if there were faculty sponsorship, students will not be allowed to operate businesses from their residence halls, to use the technical resources of the College, and they will not be funded from College resources. Further, students will not be allowed to use the marks of the College to advance their interests. The College needs to make sure that all faculty members are aware of this position and that students receive a consistent message.

This policy does not reflect a change in the College's position on the issue but further refines it from the faculty perspective as well. The issue could be addressed in faculty chair training with the intention of having the chairs disseminate the message to members of their departments.

Related Information

History/Revision Information

Responsible Office/Division:

Effective Date:

Last Amended Date:

Next Review Date:

Also Found In: