

Sauk Valley Community College
April 27, 2026

Action Item 4.3

Topic: Board Policy *432.01 Whistleblower* – First Reading

Shared Ethical Values: Sauk Valley Community College respects the worth and dignity of all people; stands for integrity and fairness; and encourages responsibility, accountability, and persistence in a caring, supportive environment.

Presented By: Dr. David Hellmich

Presentation:

The administration continues its process of reviewing all Board policies annually. As a part of this review, *432.01 Whistleblower* has been revised.

Recommendation:

The administration recommends the Board approve the revision to *432.01 Whistleblower* as presented for a first reading.

432.01 Whistleblower

1. Sauk Valley Community College is committed to the highest ethical standards and conducts its operations in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations. As such, the College encourages employees to report allegations of internal wrongdoing and provides assurance they will be protected from retaliation for such reporting in good faith.
2. Protected activity under this policy includes reporting, disclosing, or objecting to activities the employee reasonably believes violate federal or state laws, rules, or regulations.
3. Wrongdoing may include, but is not limited to, the following: crimes or violations of the law or governmental regulations; fraud or financial irregularity; improper use of college funds, property, or assets; corruption, bribery, or blackmail; and harming college property.
4. The College promptly investigates reports of possible fraudulent or dishonest use or misuse of college resources made under this policy. Appropriate action is taken against anyone found to have engaged in fraudulent or dishonest conduct, including disciplinary action by the College, and/or civil and criminal prosecution when warranted.
5. Nothing in this policy prohibits an employee from reporting concerns to a governmental agency or law enforcement authority or participating in an investigation conducted by such entities.

6. Reporting:
 - a. Concerns about possible fraudulent or dishonest use or misuse of resources should be made in writing via a form in FAST, which will be forwarded to the President, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, or the Chief Human Resources Officer. Sufficient information should be provided so that an investigation can be conducted. Concerns may be submitted on a confidential anonymous basis, if the person so desires, but doing so does not obligate the College to investigate the alleged misconduct.
 - b. The Whistleblower Hotline is an alternate reporting process. The number of 815-835-6444 has been established and may be used to report concerns about possible fraudulent or dishonest use or misuse of resources. The Whistleblower Hotline is not an alternative grievance process intended to resolve a personal/personnel injustice.
 - c. Employees reporting suspected improper activities on the Whistleblower Hotline are encouraged to identify themselves so the College may contact them for further information if necessary. Reports may be made anonymously if the employee feels that it is the only way they can disclose the information safely.
7. The College encourages those submitting concerns to put their names to allegations because appropriate follow-up questions and investigation may not be possible unless the source of the information is identified. Anonymous whistleblowers must provide sufficient corroborating evidence to justify the commencement of an investigation. An investigation of unspecified wrongdoing or broad allegations is not undertaken without verifiable evidentiary support. Because investigators are unable to interview anonymous whistleblowers, it may be more difficult to evaluate the credibility of the allegations and, therefore, less likely to cause an investigation to be initiated.
8. Reports and investigations are kept confidential to the extent allowed by the circumstances and the law. In general, whistleblower complaints are shared with those who have a need to know so that the College can conduct an effective investigation, determine what action to take based on the results of any such investigation, and, in appropriate cases, contact law enforcement personnel. Should disciplinary or legal action be taken against a person or persons as a result of a whistleblower complaint, such persons may also have the right to know the identity of the whistleblower.
9. An employee who in good faith reports a suspected violation of law or college policy will not suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequences from other employees or the College. This protection applies whether the report is made internally or to a governmental agency, and includes employees who refuse to participate in activities they reasonably believe would violate federal or state law. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a suspected violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment. Whistleblowers who believe they have been retaliated against may file a written complaint with the Chief Human Resources Officer or the College President. Any complaint of retaliation is promptly investigated and appropriate corrective measures taken if allegations of retaliation are substantiated.

10. Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation. This policy is not intended and should not be used for personal grievances. Allegations that prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false are viewed as a serious offense subject to discipline up to and including dismissal from employment.

Revised: 03-26-2018

Cabinet Reviewed: 12-03-2024, 02-24-2026