

WASHINGTON STATE ETHICS ISSUES Especially for Student Employees

CWU has thousands of students, thousands of employees, and thousands of *student* employees. We operate under university policy, state administrative code, state and federal law, collective bargaining agreements, and grant and contract stipulations.

The “world of work” can be confusing and working for an entity of the State of Washington can be even more so. All state employees, including employees of the CWU, are bound by the State Ethics in Public Service Act, RCW 42.52. This Act, commonly known as the ethics law, generally addresses conflicts of interest, improper use of state resources, compensation for outside activities, and gifts.

1.) What belongs to CWU does not belong to you.

The university owns buildings, furniture, equipment, paper, pencils and pens, computers, etc. It actually *belongs* to the citizens of Washington State. That means that you cannot adopt any of these things as your own. It’s called stealing.

2.) Time is a resource.

When you are at work, you should be working. Just because you have been scheduled to work certain hours or a certain number of hours does not mean that you are “owed” that schedule or those hours. The university is like a business. If you are not doing work while being paid, you are stealing your paycheck.

3.) The "me" principle

Generally the answer is "no" as to whether you may conduct an activity—during work, with public funds—that is designed to benefit you personally or your friends and family. You may not check your personal e-mail, update your Instagram account, copy class assignments on the copy machine, or make long distance phone calls using a CWU land-line. You may not give your mom CWU stationery because she thinks it’s snazzy. Please see principle #3 for further clarification.

4.) The “de minimis ” principle

It's ok to make very minor use of public resources for personal use: using the phone on your desk or your university email to remind your roommate to feed the dog or to see if the pass is open. Check with your supervisor about this principle in your work place.

5.) Who gets to use university facilities?

Anyone may use university facilities. Generally, however, private groups have to pay whereas local, state, and federal government entities pay a reduced fee or no fee at all. The university may waive facilities fees. (See <http://www.cwu.edu/resources-reports/sites/cts.cwu.edu/resources-reports/files/documents/CWUR3-40-380>)

