

● **Ethics Officer's October Monthly Report**

Summary

This report provides a general update on the progress and activities for the Ethics Office for October 2005.

Attachments

None

Detailed Report

Activities

1. The Launch of the Ethics Program received an Award of Excellence (runner-up) in the annual PRisms contest of the Los Angeles chapter of the Public Relations Society of America. The PRisms contest is considered the most prestigious communications awards program in the greater Los Angeles area. Metropolitan competed against national and international public relations agencies and corporations.
2. The Ethics Officer reviewed ethics activities of 2005 for compliance with AB 1234 and began to plan activities for 2006 to be in compliance. A letter was prepared requesting approval for activities from the Attorney General's office.
3. A board letter was prepared with recommendations of employees to be included in AB 1234 training.
4. The Ethics Office Web site had 658 visitors from September 16 – October 15, 2005, with an average of 49 visits per day during this period.
5. Jeff Cable and Edie Yamasaki attended the 2005 Annual Ethics Officer Association Conference in San Antonio, Texas, October 25 – 27.

Ethics Education

1. The second of three Ethics Manuals, *Partnering: Ethics and Contracts, Grants and Sponsored Programs at The Metropolitan Water District* is in process.
2. The Ethics Office has conducted four new employee orientations.

Ethics Questions and Concern

1. The Ethics Officer and Ethics Educator responded to questions regarding
 - staff interference with contract process
 - conflict of interest (2)
 - personnel matters (3)
 - favoritism
 - notice given to employees regarding IT security measures

Board Report (Ethics Officer's October Monthly Report)

Matters of Concern

1. **September 7, 2005 – Issue: Policy Issues (130)**

An employee expressed concern that another employee had been promoted into a position requiring a degree “from an accredited college or university,” claiming that the degree was not from an accredited college or university. Review by HR and the Ethics Officer with the concerned employee found that the college in question was accredited by the “Association for Online Academic Excellence.” The promoted employee had, therefore, met the requirements described in the minimum qualifications. If the intent is for degrees to come from colleges accredited through vehicles deemed appropriate by the U.S. Department of Education, HR was advised by the Ethics Officer to change the language in upcoming job announcements to specify that. However, because of continuing concern, this matter was referred to the October 3, 2005 Intake Committee. The Intake Committee heard an appeal of this matter and determined that the candidate met qualifications as stated, that there is no violation of Ethics Policy.
Disposition: Closed

2. **September 12, 2005 – Issue: Contractor Relations (121)**

This is a concern, previously thought to be resolved, regarding a potential subcontractor who was dropped by the prime contractor. The Assistant Group Manager’s belief is that the matter was handled appropriately by the prime contractor, but that Metropolitan needs to be careful not to be perceived to be offering 'advice' as to who prime contractors should bring on with subcontractors. The Ethics Officer was approached by three employees with continuing concerns on this matter. The Assistant Group Manager has been approached with additional questions.
Disposition: Pending

3. **October 10, 2005 – Issue: Product Quality Concerns**

A member of the public expressed concern about the upkeep at Lake Skinner. The matter was referred to Group Manager Jill Wicke. Riverside County Parks Department is responsible for infrastructure and work is taking place. The member of the public was asked to provide further information for Ms. Wicke. Referred to appropriate department.
Disposition: Closed

4. **October 13, 2005 – Issue: Contractor Relations**

An employee reported through The Network that a contractor was bringing family members to work. The caller was notified that some specifics or identification would need to be provided before the concern could be investigated.
Disposition: Closed

5. **October 25, 2005 – Issue: Policy Issues**

An employee reported through The Network that a recurrent worker is taking a company vehicle home from work. The matter is being reviewed and referred to the appropriate department.
Disposition: Pending