

Sir William Osler said: “Doctors record patients’ medical histories without paying much attention to the patient. But we must never forget that the look on the patient’s face, the tremble in his hands, the falter in his speech, the dreams he has, and the drawings he makes all are potential signs of what really troubles him or her.”

As Dr. Osler so eloquently voiced over a century ago, to be an excellent physician and patient advocate, one must be an astute observer of all forms of human expression, both spoken and unspoken. To that end, the School of Medicine believes that students must purposefully strive to develop their own professional identity as put forth in the UT System Transformation in Medical Education (TIME) Initiative working definition:

“Professional Identity Formation is the transformative journey through which one integrates the knowledge, skills, values, and behaviors of a competent, humanistic physician with one’s own unique identity and core values. This continuous process fosters personal and professional growth through mentorship, reflection, and experiences that affirm the best practices, traditions, and ethics of the medical profession.”

The following physician behaviors (1) serve as the foundation of the School of Medicine’s Professionalism Code:

- Physicians subordinate their own interests to the interests of others.
- Physicians adhere to high ethical and moral standards.
- Physicians respond to societal needs, and their behaviors reflect a social contact with the communities served.
- Physicians evince core humanistic values, including honesty and integrity, caring and compassion, altruism and empathy, respect for others, and trustworthiness.
- Physicians exercise accountability for themselves and for their colleagues.
- Physicians demonstrate a continuing commitment to excellence.
- Physicians exhibit a commitment to scholarship and to advancing their field.
- Physicians deal with high levels of complexity and uncertainty.
- Physicians reflect upon their actions and decisions.

1. Swick, H.M., “Toward a Normative Definition of Medical Professionalism.” *Academic Medicine*. 2000; 75: 612-616.