VI. DOCTOR OF MEDICINE (M.D.) POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

E. Code of Professional Conduct

i. Preamble

Because practicing medicine is an honor earned every day, we—the faculty and students of the UT School of Medicine at San Antonio (SOM)—subscribe to the highest standards of conduct. Our aim is professional behavior beyond reproach. In particular, we subscribe to the following points of conduct:

ii. Code

I will promote and maintain an honest and effective learning environment. I will:

• do my part to ensure that the environment promotes acquisition of knowledge and mastery of skills;
• not tolerate harassment, flagrant disruption of the learning process, demeaning language or visual aids, disrespectful behavior, or lack of respect for life and living things;
• exhibit the highest standards of conduct, honesty, and professionalism;
• identify and report those who exhibit academic or professional misconduct; and
• appreciate each individual as a person of value and help maintain dignity during the learning process.

I will place primary emphasis on the health and welfare of patients. I will:

• attain and maintain the most current knowledge in the healing arts and the skill to apply that knowledge;
• display respect and compassion for each patient;
• foster and preserve the trust that exists between professional and patient;
• respect and maintain the confidentiality of the patient; and
• let no patient in whose care I participate suffer physically or emotionally as a consequence of unprofessional behavior by myself or others.

I will conduct myself at all times in a professional manner. I will:
• exhibit honesty, openness, and evenhandedness in dealing with others;
• maintain my personal hygiene and appearance in such a way that it does not interfere with my ability to communicate with patients, colleagues, or community;
• not engage in language or behavior which is disrespectful, abusive, or insulting;
• take responsibility for my actions, acknowledge my limitations, and ask for assistance when needed;
• assure the welfare of others is not compromised as a result of my inadequacy or impairment;
• not be deceitful or self-serving;
• achieve satisfactory balance in personal, community, and professional activities;
• not allow personal conflicts to interfere with objectivity in relationships with colleagues or patients;
• accommodate a fellow professional’s request for my knowledge and expertise;
• refrain from the manifestation of bias, including sexual, marital, racial, ethnic, or cultural harassment;
• support my fellow professionals if they should falter; and
• identify colleagues whose ability to provide care is impaired, support them as they seek rehabilitation, and help them to reintegrate into the medical community.

iii. Administration of the Code of Professional Conduct for Students

As part of the SOM’s recent Professional Identity Development initiatives, and recognizing that professionalism is a critical physician competency, this policy is under review for congruence with professionalism goals. However, any policy modifications will respect the principles of the current policy: reports from complainant(s) and person(s) charged, witness verification of events when possible, due process (decision-making through Student Promotions Committee-SPC), and timely resolution.

Medical students are expected to maintain the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct. Medical students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner in interaction not only with patients, but also with peers, faculty, and staff of the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio (HSC) and the broader community. The SOM, HSC and UT System have written expectations of professional conduct. Medical students are governed by the above Code of Professional Conduct in the SOM. Each module, clerkship or course director may also develop written expectations of professional conduct. These expectations are distributed to students, or posted for each module, clerkship or course.
A report of professional misconduct is investigated in accordance with previously established policies and procedures within the SOM, HSC and the UT System:

At present a potential violation of professional conduct is reported to a Dean for Student Affairs who meets with the complainant to determine the charges and to explain the investigative process. If the charges are not in writing, the Dean for Student Affairs will prepare a statement of the charges and obtain verification of the charges from the complainant. The Dean for Student Affairs will be responsible for ensuring that no retaliation is made against the complainant. The Dean for Student Affairs will interview the accused student, allowing the accused student the opportunity to respond to the charges and to review the available evidence supporting the charges. The Dean for Student Affairs will interview others as indicated. All HSC personnel and students must cooperate with the investigation. The investigation will be conducted in a timely manner. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Dean for Student Affairs will prepare a written report detailing the charges, the investigative process and the results of the investigation. The Dean for Student Affairs will present the written report to the SPC for recommendations. Any disciplinary action/sanction(s) recommended by the SPC shall be in accordance with applicable SOM and HSC policies (see “sanctions” below). The decision of the SPC is final, pending further appeal to the Dean of the SOM. The sanctioned student may file a written appeal to the Dean of the SOM within five business days from receipt of the SPC written decision. Within 30 calendar days from receipt of the student’s appeal, the Dean of the SOM will provide a written decision to the student, the Vice Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education and the Chair of the SPC. The decision of the Dean of the SOM is final. Within 5 business days of the Dean of the SOM’s decision, the student may file a written appeal to a higher administrative institutional official, but only on procedural concerns (See “Medical Student Academic Grievance Procedures” for details).

The following sanctions may be assessed by the SPC or the Dean of the SOM:

- a. Warning
- b. Probation
- c. Withholding of grades, official transcript, and/or degree
- d. Bar against readmission
- e. Restitution or reimbursement for damage to or misappropriation of UT System or HSC property
- f. Suspension of rights and privileges deriving in whole or in part for the SOM, including participation in extracurricular activities
- g. Suspension of eligibility for any student office or honor
- h. Cancellation of credit for scholastic work done
- i. Failing grade or reduction of a grade for an examination, assignment, or course

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j. Suspension from the HSC for a specified period of time
k. Dismissal
l. Denial of degree
m. Revocation of degree and withdrawal of diploma
n. Formal letter of reprimand in the academic file
o. Other sanction(s) as deemed appropriate under the circumstances