Protocol for a Positive Learning Environment

at

Creighton University School of Medicine

The mission statement of Creighton University states: “Creighton exists for students and learning.” Thus, it is vital to create a positive learning environment for students (learners) at all levels of education (including undergraduate students, graduate students, medical students, hospital residents, and fellows). Mistreatment, harassment, and abuse of students are not only unprofessional, but are also antithetical to the Creighton mission. Unacceptable behaviors, actions, or expressions that demean, degrade, harass, or threaten students include (but are not limited to):

- Inappropriate physical contact, physical attacks, or acts of violence
- Physical or verbal threats
- Verbal harassment
- Sexual harassment or discrimination
- Ethnic, racial, or religious harassment or discrimination
- Slurs or belittling or degrading comments or humor
- Written epithets, graffiti, or similar expressions
- Public belittling or humiliation [Indicating inadequate preparation of assignments is not mistreatment unless done in an inappropriate manner.]
- Mandated performance of personal services (e.g., baby sitting, shopping)

The University’s Harassment, Discrimination and Grievance Policy 2.1.25, found at: http://www.creighton.edu/generalcounsel/cupolicies/ (the “Policy”) lists other behaviors and actions that are also unacceptable at Creighton University. The Policy should be consulted along with this Protocol.

Relationships with other students, staff, faculty, and patients (see University Policy 2.1.25, found at the link above, which states:

- Creighton University desires to foster relationships among its members and with others that are based on dignity and respect, and are free from discrimination. By selecting and utilizing the educational programs of Creighton University, students have demonstrated confidence in the University. In their personal dealings with students, University employees are representatives of the University and are expected to exemplify its Christian and educational values. It is incumbent upon all those who are in positions of authority over students not to abuse, or seem to abuse, the power with which they are entrusted.
- Inappropriate personal relationships between employees and students may have the effect of undermining the atmosphere of trust and mutual respect upon which the educational process depends. Particularly troublesome are romantic relationships. Even when both parties have consented to such a relationship, it is the employee who holds a position of special responsibility within the University. It is the employee, therefore, who will be held accountable for unprofessional behavior.
- Employees should be aware that a romantic relationship with a student may render them liable for disciplinary action if the relationship creates, reasonably has the potential to create,
or reasonably appears to create a conflict between the employee’s personal interest and the employee’s obligations to the University and its students.

- Because residents, fellows, tutors, and teaching assistants may be less accustomed than other employees to thinking of themselves as possessing professional responsibilities, they should be particularly sensitive and exercise special care in their relationships with students whom they instruct or evaluate.

**Reporting of mistreatment or abuse:**

- Mistreated or abused students or any observers of mistreatment or abuse should report incidents as soon as possible.

- Reports of incidents should be made to either the Associate Dean for Student Affairs (402-280-2805) or the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education (402-280-4677). Reports of sexual harassment or discrimination can also be made to the Office of Equity and Inclusion (402-280-3189) the Human Resources Director (402-280-2709), the individual’s supervisor, or their supervisor’s supervisor. See the Harassment, Discrimination and Grievance Policy and the Mandatory Reporters Policy (2.1.26).

- All attempts will be made to maintain confidentiality and to protect students from harm or retaliation; any form of retaliation following the reporting of mistreatment or abuse is forbidden and complaints of retaliation will be dealt with by the Dean of the School of Medicine, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education, or by the Human Resources Director, as appropriate.

- Any complainant or witness found to have been dishonest or malicious in making an allegation of mistreatment will be subject to disciplinary action.

**Administrative actions related to mistreatment or abuse:**

- The Associate Dean for Student Affairs or the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education will discuss the incident(s) with the Chair of the involved department or the Director of the Hospital division or clinic and require a prompt investigation and appropriate action. All such matters will also be reported to the University's Affirmative Action Director, the Human Resources Director, and the Vice President for Student Services, as appropriate.

- The departmental Chair or Hospital division or clinic Director will prepare a written report concerning the investigation and the action taken, which will be given to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education, who will then discuss the report with the reporting student(s). All such reports will also be provided to the University's Associate Vice President for Equity and Inclusion, the Human Resources Director, and the Vice Provost for Student Services, as appropriate.

**Agreement:**
I have read and understand this document and agree to create a positive learning environment at Creighton University School of Medicine.