

**Standards of Conduct Statement**  
**The Appropriate Treatment of Medical Students in the Education Setting**

Institutional Statement

The Florida State University publishes two separately bound documents, the *General Bulletin, Graduate Edition* and the *Student Handbook*, that outline policies with regard to:

Equal Opportunity and Pluralism  
Persons with Disabilities  
HIV/AIDS Policy  
Sexual Harassment Policy  
Values and Moral Standards

The “Equal Opportunity and Pluralism Statement” reads, in part:

The Florida State University reaffirms its commitment to a policy of equal opportunity and pluralism, thus enhancing diversity and assuring a campus climate that values and respects the worth and dignity of all persons. The concept of pluralism, a state or condition of society in which individuals of diverse backgrounds are willing "to affirm each other's dignity; are ready to benefit from each others experience; and are eager to acknowledge each other's contribution to the common welfare and progress for all," serves as a foundation for all programs, services, and activities affecting students, faculty, staff, employees, applicants and others affiliated with the University. (1999-2001 *General Bulletin, Graduate Edition*, p. 5)

The commitment of the University President to foster pluralism and maintain diversity for the mutual benefit of the University and the public, is reflected in his appointment of a Director of Equal Opportunity and Pluralism. That administrator's key focus is to help create an ideal environment of excellence encompassing fairness, respect and trust -- free from mistreatment, discrimination and harassment -- by utilizing a flexible, yet, balanced approach, to optimize the aims of all stakeholders in conjunction with the University's objectives.

The College of Medicine at The Florida State University is committed to maintaining an academic environment in which faculty and students can work together freely to educate and develop exemplary physicians who provide the highest level of patient-centered health care, discover and advance knowledge and are responsive to community needs especially through service to elder, rural, minority, and underserved populations. The College of Medicine recognizes that each member of the medical school community should be accepted as an autonomous individual and treated in a civil and humane manner without regard to his or her race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, age, disability or any other factor irrelevant to participation in the activities of the College of Medicine. Diversity in background, outlook and interest among faculty, students and patients inherent in the practice of medicine, and appreciation and understanding of such diversity is an important aspect of medical training. The development and nurturing of professional and collegial attitudes for effective caring and compassionate health care requires mutual respect among members of the College of Medicine community (faculty, staff and students), and between these members and patients and their families.

### Abusive Treatment Defined

Certain behaviors are inherently destructive to the teacher-learner relationship. Behaviors such as violence, sexual harassment or inappropriate discrimination based on personal characteristics must never be tolerated. Other behavior can also be inappropriate if the effect interferes with professional development. Behavior patterns such as making habitual demeaning or derogatory remarks, belittling comments or destructive criticism fall into this category. On the behavioral level, abuse may be operationally defined as behavior by medical school faculty, staff or students that is consensually disapproved by society and by the academic community as either exploitative or punishing. Examples of inappropriate behaviors are:

- Physical punishment or physical threats
- Sexual harassment
- Discrimination based on race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, age, disability
- Repeated episodes of psychological punishment of a student by a particular superior (e.g. public humiliation, threats and intimidation, removal of privileges)
- Grading used to punish a student rather than to evaluate objective performance
- Assigning tasks for punishment rather than to evaluate objective performance
- Requiring the performance of personal services
- Taking credit for another individual's work
- Intentional neglect or intentional lack of communication

### Individuals Charged with Teaching

The College of Medicine is committed to hiring and training a world-class medical school faculty. Individuals considered as faculty and staff are selected based upon their scholarly standards of their discipline, their respect for students as individuals, and their ability to serve as intellectual guides and counselors. Professors foster honest academic conduct, insure that student evaluations are based upon merit, and respect the confidentiality of the student professor relationship. Professors avoid exploitation, harassment, or inappropriate scholarly assistance to students. Academic freedom is embraced and protected.

### Policies and Procedures for Handling Complaints

Students who believe they have been subject to abusive treatment may report the allegations to the Director of Student Affairs or to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs or to the Assistant Dean of the training-site campus. After a preliminary investigation to assess a level of validity of the accusation, the accusation will be referred to the Committee on Student Welfare. The Committee will review relevant documentation, conduct an investigation of the complaint, which may include a face-face discussion with the complainant, and with the individual about whom the complaint is being made. All proceedings of the Committee are confidential.

The Director of Student Affairs and the Assistant Dean of the training site will be the first contact for students seeking information, advice, counseling or wishing to report an abuse violation. these occurrences will be investigated and referred to the appropriate source for addressing the specific complaint.