



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY

School of Medicine

## OPERATING POLICY

# STUDENT MISTREATMENT

CATEGORY: STUDENT AFFAIRS

COORDINATOR: DR. YAMI BAZAN

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Loma Linda University School of Medicine seeks to educate ethical and proficient Christian physicians and scholars through instruction, example, and the pursuit of truth. In order to do this, the School of Medicine and its faculty are committed to the following fundamental values: compassion, excellence, humility, integrity, justice, teamwork, and wholeness. These values may occasionally be formally taught by faculty; but more often they are learned informally by students through observation of models of professional behavior toward students, colleagues, and patients.

Examples of mistreatment include verbal mistreatment,<sup>1</sup> physical mistreatment,<sup>2</sup> discrimination,<sup>3</sup> excessive or unreasonable time demands,<sup>4</sup> sexual harassment,<sup>5</sup> and the use of grading or other forms of assessment in a punitive manner. Such behavior by faculty or staff, or other behavior that is inimical to the development of mutual respect, is unacceptable.

In the history of medical education, teachers have, at times, sought to motivate students by publicly degrading or humiliating those whom they judge are inadequately prepared or behaving inappropriately. This practice is not acceptable at Loma Linda University. While teachers do have the responsibility to motivate and correct students, when correction of an individual is needed, this is usually best done in private, but always in a way that shows respect for him/her as a person.

An important part of the teaching of mutual respect among professionals is the perception of students as they observe faculty in their interactions with each other. Therefore, faculty should avoid inappropriate behavior or mistreatment of other professionals and staff. This includes the avoidance of derogatory remarks about or attitudes toward individual colleagues, services, or departments.

Students also learn professional behavior and demeanor by observing their teachers as they interact with patients. Such professional interactions should always be courteous and respectful.

Respect for individuals includes, but is not limited to, such things as punctuality, thoughtfulness, mindfulness of personal space, as well as manner and mode of address, appropriately modest draping of patients, tone and content of verbal interchanges, and body language. In addition, discussion of patients out of their hearing should continue to show the same degree of respect and should not include contemptuous, derogatory, judgmental, or demeaning remarks.

If a medical student expresses an unwillingness to participate in an aspect of training or patient care as a matter of conscience, that stance should be explored in a nonjudgmental manner to ensure that the teacher and student fully understand the issue. The student's position on matters of conscience should be honored without academic or personal penalty, as long as it does not interfere with the welfare of the patient and the overall educational goals of Loma Linda University School of Medicine.

Any student who feels that he/she may have experienced or observed mistreatment or unprofessional behavior by residents, faculty, staff, or students in violation of these standards of behavior is encouraged to report his or her concerns to one of the individuals below. Reports of unprofessional treatment should be made to the School of Medicine administration. Reports of sexual harassment or any violation of the University's Title IX policy (see this policy in Section V of this Student Handbook) should be made to one of the administrators listed below or directly to the LLU Title IX coordinator. Within the School of Medicine, mistreatment can be reported to the following administrators: the senior associate dean for medical student education; the associate dean for clinical education; the associate dean for student affairs; the associate dean for curriculum evaluation and learner assessment; the associate dean of physician formation and wholeness; the assistant dean for basic science education; the associate dean for basic sciences and translational research or the assistant dean, graduate student affairs. The Title IX coordinator may be contacted by calling Employee Relations at 909-651-4001 or directly at 909-651-4638.

<sup>1</sup>*Verbal or nonverbal mistreatment*—includes:

- Shouting, hostility, profanity, or offensive gestures.
- Repeated or blatant conduct directed toward any person, which is intended to insult or stigmatize that person.

<sup>2</sup>*Physical mistreatment*—includes:

- Physical punishment, such as hitting, slapping, pushing, or kicking.
- The threat of physical punishment.
- Intentionally or negligently placing another at risk of physical harm.

<sup>3</sup>*Discrimination*—includes:

- Disparate treatment based on gender, gender identity, age, ethnicity, race, disability, or sexual orientation that stigmatizes or degrades that person.

<sup>4</sup>*Unreasonable time demands*—includes:

- Requiring a student to perform personal services, such as shopping or babysitting.
- Requiring a student to perform menial tasks with the intent to humiliate the student.

<sup>5</sup>*Sexual harassment*—see “Policy Prohibiting Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination on the Basis of Sex (Title IX)” in the University Policy section of the *Student Handbook*, which is available online. If the mistreatment involves sexual harassment, the procedures of this policy must be followed.

**Procedures** Students who believe they have been mistreated have the right, and are encouraged, to initiate one or more of the following procedural options. If, however, the mistreatment involves sexual harassment, the procedure of the sexual harassment policy must be followed. Loma Linda University will ensure that this process occurs fairly and shall be free of retaliation. Students who believe that they have been mistreated should report such conduct to one of the school deans listed above, the University Vice President for Student Experience or the University Provost. Students may meet directly with the individual involved in the mistreatment and come to a mutually agreeable resolution. Students may choose to take someone with them, such as a faculty member, department chair, unit manager, clinical instructor, chief resident, or other individual. If the student is uncomfortable meeting with the individual involved, he/she is encouraged to follow the procedure below. Students are reminded that reporting inappropriate behavior is a personal and professional responsibility.

The procedure includes the following:

1. Report the incident(s), to one of the school deans listed above, or to the office of the University’s vice president for student experience or to the University provost. A systematic method of reporting allows patterns of behavior to be considered in determining the course of action.
2. It is the responsibility of the dean to investigate, document, and coordinate immediate and appropriate corrective measures/protective actions that are reasonably calculated to end mistreatment, eliminate the hostile environment, and prevent reoccurrence.
3. In determining the actions to be taken, consideration will be given to frequency and/or severity of the conduct; as well as the position held by the accused. A primary objective will be to protect the student from adverse consequences for having reported the incident.

**Confidential Advisors for Medical Students Principles Objective:** The position of Confidential Advisor for Medical Students (CAMS) was developed to promote a positive educational learning for the School of Medicine (SM). The CAMS will serve as an independent, impartial, informal, and confidential resource for students with concerns related to the educational environment.

**Background:** While the associate and assistant dean for student affairs, as well as other SM associate and assistant deans provide many types of support for students, they have administrative as well as supportive roles. For this reason, their responsibilities require them at times to address issues related to students’ lapses in judgement and in misconduct, including failures to comply with policies and procedures and meet academic expectations. Because of these dual roles they cannot promise confidentiality in a way a therapist or confidential advisor can. The CAMS, therefore is intended to provide an added resource for students if they wish to discuss concerns in a confidential manner with an experienced and trusted faculty member.

**Confidentiality:** The University shall protect the privacy of individuals involved in a report of mistreatment to the extent possible. Some level of disclosure may be necessary to ensure a complete and fair resolution. Disclosure may be made only on a need-to-know basis. In keeping

with ideals of professionalism and courtesy, the student is advised to refrain from discussing the complaint with individuals not directly involved.

**Retaliation Prohibited** All reasonable action will be taken to assure no retaliation against the student, witnesses, or anyone cooperating with the investigation.