

## **Appendix B**

### **Reaffirming Institutional Standards of Behavior in the Learning Environment**

The medical learning environment is expected to facilitate students' acquisition of the professional and collegial attitudes necessary for effective, caring and compassionate health care. The development and nurturing of these attitudes is enhanced and, indeed, based on the presence of mutual respect between teacher and learner. Characteristic of this respect is the expectation that all participants in the educational program assume their responsibilities in a manner that enriches the quality of the learning process.

While these goals are primary to a school's educational mission, it must be acknowledged that the social and behavioral diversity of students, faculty, residents, and staff, combined with the intensity of the interactions between them, will, from time to time, lead to alleged, perceived or real incidents of inappropriate behavior or mistreatment of individuals. Examples of mistreatment include sexual harassment; discrimination or harassment based on race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical handicap or age; humiliation, psychological or physical punishment and the use of grading and other forms of assessment in a punitive manner. The occurrence, either intentional or unintentional, of such incidents results in a disruption of the spirit of learning and a breach in the integrity and trust between teacher and learner.

The diversity represented by the many participants in the learning process requires the medical school to reaffirm, on a periodic and regular basis, its expectations of faculty, students, residents and staff. The setting forth of the institution's standards of behavior should be undertaken in a manner that encourages the exchange of ideas among all who participate in the learning process. This process of codifying acceptable behavior should encourage recognition of the nuances of interpersonal behavior such that individuals are sensitive to the interpretation of their actions. Clear examples of appropriate and inappropriate behavior, particularly in regard to the interaction between teacher and learner, should be delineated and disseminated to faculty, students, residents, and staff. The establishment of standards of behavior should reinforce the institution's commitment to the tenets of acceptable professional behavior and the assurance of dignity in the learning environment.

In addition to the establishment of standards of behavior, medical schools also should establish mechanisms and institutional procedures for dealing with behavior that is not in keeping with institutional expectations. These procedures should include:

- (1) a non-threatening and easily accessible mechanism for the submission and processing of reports or allegations;
- (2) a means of determining if further investigations is warranted;
- (3) equitable methods of investigating and adjudicating complaints;
- (4) guarantees of rights of due process; and
- (5) appropriate protection of complainant and accused.

The school should have a specific written policy for the provision of confidential counseling to students, faculty, residents and staff. Schools should develop mechanisms that will serve to ensure the observance of the institution's standards of acceptable behavior.