



PROMOTING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT & AVOIDING STUDENT MISTREATMENT

I. Policy Statement

- a. CNUCOM, as a higher institution of medical and health sciences education, embraces and is committed to the importance of the Association of American Medical Colleges ([AAMC](#)) position on promoting a positive learning environment: “Having a respectful, inclusive, and robust learning environment plays a critical role in developing and sustaining a professional, capable, compassionate, and diverse healthcare workforce that will meet the healthcare needs of all.”
- b. Toward that end, CNUCOM has adopted the AAMC Statement on the Learning Environment:
 - i. “We believe that the learning environment for medical education shapes the patient care environment. The highest quality of safe and effective care for patients, and the highest quality of effective and appropriate education are rooted in human dignity.
 - ii. “We embrace our responsibility to create, support, and facilitate the learning environment shared by our patients, learners, and teachers. In this environment, our patients witness, experience, and expect a pervasive sense of respect, collegiality, kindness, and cooperation among health care team members. This includes all professionals, administrators, staff, and beginning and advanced learners from all health professions. This includes research as well as patient care environments.
 - iii. “We affirm our responsibility to create, support, and facilitate a learning environment that fosters resilience in all participants. It is our responsibility to create an atmosphere in which our learners and teachers are willing to engage with learning processes that can be inherently uncomfortable and challenging.
 - iv. “We affirm our commitment to shaping a culture of teaching and learning that is rooted in respect for all. Fostering resilience,

excellence, compassion, and integrity allows us to create patient care, research, and learning environments that are built upon constructive collaboration, mutual respect, and human dignity.”

c. Guidelines for Conduct in Faculty (Teacher) / Student (Learner) Relationships
(adapted from [AAMC Guideline](#)).

i. Responsibilities of Teachers

1. Treat all learners with respect and fairness.
2. Treat all learners equally regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.
3. Provide current material in an effective format for learning.
4. Be prepared and punctual for didactic, investigational, and clinical encounters, and prompt in responding to requests and questions from students.
5. Provide timely feedback with constructive suggestions and opportunities for improvement/remediation when needed.
6. Practice insightful (Socratic) questioning, which stimulates learning and self-discovery, and avoid overly aggressive questioning which may be perceived as hurtful, humiliating, degrading or punitive.
7. Encourage students who experience mistreatment or who witness unprofessional behavior to report the facts immediately.
8. Demonstrate respect and professionalism toward other members of the faculty in developing and delivering an integrated curriculum.

ii. Responsibilities of Learners

1. Recognize the privileges and responsibilities inherent in working with patients in clinical settings.
2. Treat all fellow learners and teachers with respect and fairness, equally regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.
3. Be prepared and on time for didactic, investigational, and clinical encounters.
4. Commit the time and energy to your studies necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of each course.
5. Recognize personal limitations and seek help as needed.
6. Communicate concerns/suggestions about the curriculum, didactic methods, teachers, or the learning environment in a respectful, professional manner.

7. Develop a lifelong learner's perspective where the students take ownership of their own learning process and anticipate long term needs for knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavior.
8. Encourage students who experience mistreatment or who witness unprofessional behavior to report the facts immediately.
9. Solicit feedback on your performance and recognize that criticism is not synonymous with "abuse".

iii. Behaviors Inappropriate to the Teacher-Learner Relationship Inappropriate and unacceptable behaviors are those which demonstrate disrespect for others or lack of professionalism in interpersonal conduct. Although there is inevitably a subjective element in the witnessing or experiencing of such behaviors, certain actions are clearly inappropriate and will not be tolerated by the institution. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Unwanted physical contact (e.g. Hitting, slapping, kicking, pushing) or the threat of the same.
2. Sexual harassment (including romantic relationships between teachers and learners in which the teacher has authority over the learner's academic progress) or harassment based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.
3. Loss of personal civility including shouting, personal attacks, insults or bullying, displays of temper (such as throwing objects), use of culturally insensitive language.
4. Discrimination of any form including in teaching and assessment based upon age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.
5. Requests for another to perform inappropriate personal errands unrelated to the didactic, investigational, or clinical situation at hand.
6. Grading/evaluation on factors unrelated to performance, effort, or level of achievement.

II. Purpose

To promote a positive learning environment and to avoid student mistreatment

III. Scope/Coverage

All California Northstate University College of Medicine (CNUCOM) faculty, students, and administrative staff.

IV. Policy Procedure

- a. Students (Learners) and Faculty (Teachers) are encouraged to emphasize and implement the positive responsibilities and behaviors described in the Guidelines for Conduct in Faculty (Teacher) / Student (Learner) Relationships described in Sections III 3(a) and (b) of this Policy.
- b. Reporting Mistreatment. COM makes available a variety of options for reporting student mistreatment. See the Mistreatment Policy ([#4803](#)) for details.
 - i. Options for reporting student mistreatment include:
 - 1. [Anonymous Report](#). (submitted automatically to the Office of Student Affairs.
 - 2. [Professionalism Concern Report](#), then submit to the Office of Student Affairs.
 - 3. [Grievance Form](#), then submit to the Office of Student Affairs.
 - 4. In-person conversation with the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, or another trusted faculty or administrator.
 - 5. Email to the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, or another trusted faculty or administrator.
- c. Any employee or student determined by the University to be responsible for harassment or other prohibited conduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to, and including termination or dismissal from the college. The University will not retaliate against anyone for filing a complaint, and will not tolerate or permit retaliation by management, employees or co-workers, or students.
- d. The Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing investigate and prosecute complaints of prohibited harassment in employment. If you think you have been harassed or that you have been retaliated against for filing a grievance, you may file a complaint with the appropriate agency. The nearest office can be found by visiting the agency websites at www.dfeh.ca.gov and www.eeoc.gov.

Associated Forms:

[Anonymous Report](#)

[Professionalism Concern Report](#)

[Grievance Form](#)

*Approval record: REVIEWED: PEC: 2/28/17 APPROVED: PEC: 10/23/17 APPROVED:
PEC: 12/14/20 APPROVED: COM DAC: 2/28/17 APPROVED: COM Faculty: 2/28/17
APPROVED: Curriculum Committee: 12/14/20 APPROVED: FEC 3/12/21
REVIEWED FEC, DEC: 2/14/2025
APPROVED CC: 2/20/2025*

REVIEW: every two (2) years or more often if required.