SUMMARY: Managing Reports of Unprofessional Academic Student Behavior

Options for Reporting Concerns About a Student’s Professional Behavior

1. Concerns about a student’s professional behavior may be either
   a. directly observed or otherwise noted by a SOM course or clerkship director; or
   b. directly observed or otherwise noted by other course/clerkship faculty or staff with whom the student interacts

Some student behaviors, such as academic dishonesty and unlawful behavior are managed under the University’s disciplinary process and are not a part of this policy.

2. A course/clerkship director who either directly experiences, or receives a report of potentially unprofessional behavior is encouraged to discuss the concerns directly with the student, and has the options of
   a. including professionalism concerns in the student’s formal course/clerkship evaluation; or
   b. submitting an Early Concern Note to the Director of Clinical Assessment and Professional Development (CAPD), Michael Ainsworth, MD; or
   c. including professionalism concerns in the student’s evaluation and submitting an Early Concern Note; or
   d. determining that no action is indicated.

3. Individuals other than course/clerkship directors who are concerned about a student’s behavior are encouraged to discuss the concerns directly with the student. If the individual feels uncomfortable with such a discussion, or believes the behavior warrants further review, they should discuss their concerns directly with the student’s course/clerkship director and/or submit an Early Concern Note to either the relevant course/clerkship director or to the CAPD.

4. Upon receipt of an Early Concern Note on a student, the CAPD director will meet with the student to discuss the report, and will make recommendations to the student regarding appropriate intervention, which are not binding. The student will be encouraged to write a response to the report, which will be maintained with the Early Concern Note for future reference.

5. Early Concern Notes are not anonymous. For this reason, those who submit an Early Concern Note are strongly urged to review their concerns personally with the student at the time the note is submitted. Early Concern Notes are confidential (their contents are shared only with the person initiating the report and the student), except as described in (7) and (8) below.

Consequences of Early Concern Notes

6. The first Early Concern Note received by a student during medical school enrollment will result in a private discussion between the student and the CAPD director, and the potential for voluntary referral and counseling. No further action will be taken unless the CAPD Director determines that, in his/her judgment, urgent intervention is indicated for the protection of the student or others.

7. A second Early Concern Note received by a student during medical school enrollment will result in a report of both Early Concern Notes (and any student written responses) by the CAPD director to the School of Medicine Curriculum Operations Committee, members of which will meet with the student to discuss the Early Concern Notes. No further action will be taken unless the Curriculum Operations Committee determines that, in its judgment, urgent intervention is indicated for the protection of the student or others.

8. A third or subsequent Early Concern Note received by a student during medical school enrollment will result in
   a. a report of all Early Concern Notes (and any student written responses) by the CAPD director to the Academic Progress Committee (APC); and
   b. the student appearing before the APC to discuss the Early Concern Notes; and
   c. action as determined by the APC, including but not limited to counseling, a professionalism remediation program, and/or dismissal; and
   d. a notation of the Early Concern Notes and any APC review in the student’s MSPE; and
   e. inclusion of the professionalism remediation program, if prescribed, on the student’s transcript

9. This process for Early Concern Notes will begin June 29, 2009. Any Early Concern Note previously received concerning behavior prior to June 29, 2009 will be counted to a maximum of one Early Concern Note per student.
UTMB School of Medicine Student Professionalism Evaluation

Early Concern Note

For Use by SOM Course and Clerkship Directors, Faculty and Staff

Complete this note if you have concerns about the professional behavior of a medical student.

Student Name _______________________________________________________________

Course __________________________  Date: ______________________________

Person originating this Early Concern Note (print) ______________________________

Title/role of person initiating this Early Concern Note ___________________________

This form is being [ ] my direct observation(s) or encounter(s) with this student 
completed based on: [ ] information about this student provided to me by a third party

A student with any of the following patterns of behavior is not meeting the personal or professional 
standards inherent to the profession of medicine. Please mark the area which best describes your concerns 
about this student. Provide comments in the space provided on the back.

Integrity and Personal Responsibility: The student
[  ] fails to fulfill responsibilities reliably
[  ] misrepresents or falsifies actions and / or information
[  ] fails to accept responsibility for actions
[  ] fails to respect patient confidentiality
[  ] uses his/her professional position to take advantage of a patient emotionally or sexually
[  ] Other ____________________________________________________

Motivation to Pursuit of Excellence and Insight for Self-improvement: The student
[  ] has inadequate personal commitment to honoring the needs of patients
[  ] is resistant or defensive in accepting criticism
[  ] remains unaware of his/her limits
[  ] resists considering or making changes based on feedback
[  ] appears to seek or accept the minimally acceptable level of effort as a goal
[  ] Other ____________________________________________________

Personal Interactions - Compassion and Respect: The student
[  ] inadequately establishes rapport or empathy with patients or families
[  ] does not function and interact appropriately within groups
[  ] is insensitive to the needs, feelings or wishes of others
[  ] uses demeaning or disrespectful language about others
[  ] is abusive or arrogant during times of stress
[  ] fails to maintain a professional appearance / attire
[  ] Other ____________________________________________________

The back of this form must be used to describe details and examples of student behaviors 
which led to completion of this form. This form will be shared with the student and the 
information will be used to counsel the student on the problem(s) identified.

Modified from the work of Maxine Papadakis; University of California, San Francisco
Early Concern Note Comments (required; a separate sheet may be attached)

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Instructions for Submitter:

1. Complete this Early Concern Note. If possible, meet with the student to review/discuss the concerns.
2. Sign below; if you meet with the student, ask the student to complete the student section below.
3. Forward this Early Concern Note to Dr. Ainsworth (route 0413).

Submitter Signature ____________________________ Date _____________________

I have reviewed the contents of this Early Concern Note with the student: [ ] YES [ ] NO

For completion by the student (optional): I have read this evaluation and discussed it with the submitter, course/clerkship director or Clinical Assessment/Professional Development director.

Student Signature ____________________________ Date _____________________

Student Comments (optional; a separate sheet may be attached) ___________________________

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________