

# Professional Conduct

## Procedural Framework for Managing Breaches of the SKMC Honor Code

The Sidney Kimmel Medical College Honor Code is concerned with standards of professional conduct and honorable behavior for the Sidney Kimmel Medical College community.

### 1. Faculty

#### Faculty Professional Code Committee (Faculty PCC)

The Faculty PCC is a body of faculty peers that provides assistance to the SKMC Community in matters relating to faculty violations of the SKMC Honor Code. Problems are to be handled with goals similar to those used for handling the impaired physician, with members aiming for assistance to rather than judgment of the faculty member. Thus, the Faculty PCC is not a disciplinary body and does not function as such. The Faculty PCC is not intended to alter those terms and conditions of employment set forth in the SKMC Bylaws, the SKMC Faculty Handbook, and Thomas Jefferson University Policies.

Allegations of any serious misconduct, such as research misconduct, violations of the conflict of interest policy, IRB noncompliance, unlawful discrimination or harassment or conduct which could be cause for dismissal as outlined in Section 10 of the SKMC Bylaws, should be handled by the appropriate committee or institutional official.

Since the Faculty PCC is not a disciplinary body, it cannot make a determination of guilt. It is a committee charged with exploring the problem with the faculty member(s) involved. The following options are available to it:

1. No further action.
2. Remedial action through assistance to the faculty person and based upon his/her concurrence.
3. Deferred action for future contingencies.
4. Referral to the Dean or his designee.
5. Referral to the Faculty Affairs Committee.
6. Other action as appropriate.

A person who becomes aware of any unprofessional behavior by a faculty member must act in one of the following ways:

1. Approach the identified faculty member concerning a possible breach of the Honor Code.
2. If the matter is still unresolved, one of the actions below must be pursued:
  - a) Discuss the matter with a member of the Faculty PCC.
  - b) Refer the matter to the chairman of the Faculty PCC for action.
  - c) Other action sanctioned by the College, e.g., direct contact with the chairman of the department, or the Dean or his designee.

All of these actions are confidential. Failure by a faculty member or student to take action as outlined would be a violation of the SKMC Honor Code.

## 2. Students

### Bylaws of the Student Professional Conduct Committee (Student PCC)

#### Article I.

The Student Professional Conduct Committee deals confidentially with all matters of professionalism pertaining to students brought to its attention. Problems are to be handled in a similar fashion to that used for the impaired physician, with the goal for students and faculty of assistance rather than judgment of the individual student. Thus, the Student PCC is not a disciplinary body and does not function as such. If the Student PCC determines that a violation of student rights, freedoms and responsibilities (as defined in the Student Handbook) may be present, the matter will be referred as delineated therein.

It is preferable that all matters of professionalism pertaining to students first be routed through the Student PCC with the clear understanding that any possible serious misconduct shall be referred promptly to the Office of Student Affairs or Judicial Board on student conduct for appropriate investigation and action. Although it is understood that students, faculty, and administration have the right to proceed directly to the Office of Student Affairs, it is hoped that the Student PCC will be utilized as an initial step for problems relating to students.

#### Article II. Membership

##### Section I. Composition of the Student PCC

The Student PCC will consist of five students from each matriculating class.

##### Section II. First Year Selections

Five first-year members will be selected, through interviews in September, by the current student PCC members. These selected members will serve until elections are held as outlined in Article II, Section III.

##### Section III. Elections

Election of students to the PCC will occur by the end of March of the first year. The ballot will be composed of those students who wish to be on it and who have submitted a statement of interest, to be included on the ballot, by a deadline determined by the PCC. Elections will be carried out electronically or by comparable means. Each student of the first year class will have a maximum of five votes. The five candidates receiving the most votes will become elected members of the PCC. In the event of a tie, a run off vote will be conducted. Elected members will serve as representatives of their class until they graduate. Five members will be chosen and electronic election records will be maintained. If a student who is elected to the student PCC to a permanent position steps down or declines their position by last day of their first academic year they will be replaced by the student who has generated the next highest number of votes in the spring election. Following that time, if a person in a permanent position steps down, the status of the position will be left to the discretion of the current elected members of the student PCC.

##### Section IV. Leadership

The PCC will be lead by a Steering Committee consisting of the second-year PCC members. One person within that steering committee shall act as the Chairperson of the PCC.

##### Section IV. A. Responsibilities of the Chairperson

Responsibilities of the chairperson will include the following:

- i. Organize, set the agenda for, and facilitate meetings.
- ii. Act as a point of contact for external inquiries to the PCC.

## **Section IV. B. Responsibilities of the Steering Committee**

Responsibilities of the steering committee will include the following:

- i. Maintain communication with the faculty advisor
- ii. Maintain communication with the dean's office
- iii. Maintain the website of the PCC
- iv. Provide a representative to the Faculty PCC
- v. Provide a representative to the Professionalism Task Force
- vi. Provide a representative to the Committee on Professionalism
- vii. Organize first-year professionalism orientation
- viii. Organize first-year PCC applications and appointments
- ix. Organize first-year elections
- x. Identify a steering committee member to take minutes at meetings and provide those minutes to the membership
- xi. Identify a steering committee member to handle the finances of the committee
- xii. Identify a member of the PCC (not necessarily on the steering committee) to maintain the archives of the PCC

## **Section IV. C.**

Should the steering committee members choose to organize themselves differently than provided for above, they must ensure that all of the above duties are addressed.

## **Section V. Removal of a Member**

If any member of the Student PCC is found to be guilty of unprofessional behavior by an administrative body (including, but not limited to the Judicial Board, Course Coordinators, Clerkship Directors, and Deans of the Medical School), they may be removed from the PCC as outlined below.

If any member of the Student PCC feels that another member has committed an act unbecoming of a member of the Student PCC, the student in question may be removed from the PCC as outlined below.

Removal will be by a 2/3 vote of the full elected membership, with the votes collected anonymously by one of the first-year appointed members or a volunteer who recuses himself or herself from voting. The position of the removed member will be filled according to Article II, Section III.

## **Article III. Internal Procedures**

### **Section I. Meetings**

There are two types of official meetings: general meetings and case meetings. A quorum will consist of 50 percent of the committee membership, with at least two members from the 1st and 2nd year classes and minimum 4/10 Student PCC members from 3rd and 4th years combined, with the condition that there is at least 1 member present from each class.

#### **Section I. A. General Meetings**

General meetings will be held quarterly or as needed as determined by the membership of the PCC. All decisions will be rendered by a simple majority vote.

#### **Section I. B. Case Meetings**

Case meetings will occur promptly within one week, whenever possible, after a concern is brought to the committee. Students, faculty, or administration may refer matters to the Student PCC. All final judg-

ments as outlined in Article IV, Section I will be rendered by a two-thirds majority vote of the members participating.

## **Article IV. The Role of the Student PCC in Professionalism at Jefferson**

### **Section I. Cases**

Since the Student PCC is not a disciplinary body, it cannot make a determination of guilt. It is a committee charged with exploring the problem with the student(s) involved. The following options are available to it:

- i. No further action
- ii. Remedial action through assistance to the student and based upon concurrence by the students involved
- iii. Deferred action for future contingencies
- iv. Referral to the Office of Student Affairs
- v. Referral to the Judicial Board on student conduct
- vi. Other action as appropriate

If a student commits a dishonorable action but makes a conscientious and voluntary effort to rectify the situation prior to any investigational procedures, the Student PCC may take the student's efforts into consideration.

No details of the proceedings of the Student PCC will be included in the student's permanent record unless the Student PCC deliberations become part of the basis for subsequent action by the Office of Student Affairs or the Judicial Board on student conduct.

### **Section II. Education**

The Student PCC will take a proactive role in the Jefferson community toward the promotion of professionalism as provided for in the Honor Code and the Shared Code of Professional Values. In particular, the Student PCC will assume the role of introducing the first-year class to Sidney Kimmel Medical College's Honor Code through presentation and discussion, and facilitate the signing of the Honor Code.

## **Article V. Amendment of Bylaws**

Any amendment of these bylaws must be ratified by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote of the full elected membership (note that this does not include the five appointed first-year members).

## **3. Monitoring and Continuing Evaluation of the SKMC Honor Code**

A person who becomes aware of any academic or clinical dishonesty or other unacceptable professional behavior by a student must act in one of the following ways:

1. Approach the suspected student concerning a possible breach of the SKMC Honor Code to determine whether suspicion was correct.
2. If the matter is still unresolved one of the actions below must be pursued:
  - a) Discuss the matter with a member of the Student PCC.
  - b) Refer the matter to the chairman of the Student PCC for action.
  - c) Some other action sanctioned by the College; e.g., direct contact with the Office of Student Affairs

All of these actions are confidential. Failure by a student to take action as outlined would be a violation of the SKMC Honor Code.

The principles underlying the SKMC Honor Code should not change with time. However, the details of implementation might need revision in subsequent years. Review of the SKMC Honor Code shall be conducted by a standing committee of faculty and students, which will meet at least annually. This is

called the Committee on Professionalism. This committee shall consist of eight persons: four faculty and four students. The Committee on Committees shall appoint two faculty and the Student Council, two students; the Student PCC, two students and Faculty PCC, two faculty members. Input in this evaluation process shall come from the following possible sources:

- 1) Periodic questionnaire to faculty and students.
- 2) Examination of the records of the Faculty PCC and the Student PCC.
- 3) Invited input from students and faculty; (e.g., Student Council, Faculty meetings [general, Professorial]).
- 4) Office of Student Affairs.
- 5) Committee on Student Affairs.
- 6) Committee on Faculty Affairs.
- 7) Committee on Curriculum

## Appendix 1 – Faculty PCC

### 1. Composition of Faculty PCC

The Faculty PCC will be selected by a vote of the Professorial Faculty as overseen by the Faculty Professorial Advisory Committee. The membership shall be ten faculty members serving a term of two years. They may be renewed twice for additional two year terms. A chairman, vice chairman, and recording secretary will be elected from among the members at the first meeting of the academic year. The chairman will be responsible (1) for presiding over the meetings (and in his or her absence, the vice chairman) according to Roberts' Rules of Order; (2) for seeing that minutes of each meeting are kept by the recording secretary. Members of the Faculty Affairs Committee and members of the Faculty Grievance Subcommittee shall also not be members of the Faculty PCC.

### 2. Proceedings of Faculty PCC

Meetings shall be called by the chairman of the Faculty PCC, and will be held promptly within one week whenever possible after a complaint is received by the committee. Individual students, Student PCC, or faculty or administrators may refer matters to the Faculty PCC. A quorum shall consist of 50 percent of committee membership. For a matter involving either a basic science or a clinical science faculty member at least three members of the appropriate science faculty should be members of the Faculty PCC, respectively. If the problem involves a volunteer or full-time clinical science member, appropriate representation should be present.

## Appendix 2 – Affirmation of SKMC Honor Code for Faculty and Students

I have read, and I understand, the Sidney Kimmel Medical College Statement of Professional Conduct. I shall conduct myself in a manner consistent with the SKMC Honor Code.

I understand that I am responsible for my own actions as well as for upholding the integrity of the medical profession. Should any of my colleagues appear to violate the SKMC Honor Code, I shall address the matter personally with that colleague, and/or discuss it with a member of the Faculty Professional Conduct Committee or Student Professional Conduct Committee, as appropriate, to resolve the matter, or take any other action consistent with the terms of this Statement.

Print Name:\_\_\_\_\_

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_

These affirmation statements will be collected by a member of the Student PCC at registration.

## **“In House” Written Examination Administration Procedures**

It is our responsibility to foster a collaborative teaching and learning environment that is congruent with the precepts of the Sidney Kimmel Medical College Honor Code:

“As Jefferson students and faculty we seek to establish a community based on honor, integrity and awareness of others....As faculty, residents, fellows, and medical students, we pledge to embrace the academic and social integrity on which Jefferson was founded, pursuing honesty, equality and fairness in all aspects of our lives. This includes not seeking an unfair advantage over our peers, teachers, students, residents, fellows or any other member of the Thomas Jefferson University.”

Conduct of Examinations and Statement of Professional Conduct for Examinations) these procedures will be followed for all examinations:

1. Department during examinations will be the responsibility of each individual student and the collective responsibility of all students present.
2. The faculty and/or staff will be present to administer the examinations.
3. Examinees will neither give nor receive aid during an examination.
4. In the case of a possible violation of professional conduct, the observer shall approach the student in question personally and/or discuss the matter with a member of the Student PCC to resolve the matter, or take any other action consistent with the terms of the SKMC Honor Code.

Test administration procedures will also be in place to minimize the potential for cheating. These include:

- Use of multiple examination forms.
- No access to cell phones or other extraneous electronic devices during exam administration. If feasible, phones and other non-examination electronic devices should be left at home. If this is not feasible, students must keep phones and other electronic devices turned off and stored under the desk.