

# **Professionalism Position Paper**

This position paper is to supplement the existing Dalhousie Medicine Code of Conduct and Faculty of Medicine Professionalism Policy and to identify the mutual concern and consideration that the student body has for the pertaining issues.

## **Principles**

### **Respect**

One of the fundamental principles we subscribe to is the respect for others' worth, ideas and opinions whether they are patients, colleagues, classmates, faculty, staff, other professionals, the public or our peers from other medical schools. Of equal value, we acknowledge the importance of respect for ourselves and value our own ideas. We subscribe to the philosophy to treat others as we wish to be treated, to behave with courtesy and to extend the hospitality and accommodation to others for which our community is well known. We are aware that our behaviour even outside the clinical environment may influence the trust the public places in the medical profession.

### **Honesty and Integrity**

Equally important to respect, we choose to act with honesty and integrity in all things personal, professional and academic, never claiming someone else's credit as our own and understanding that withholding the truth may be tantamount to lying.

### **Compassion and Empathy**

At Dalhousie Medicine, the students are dedicated to the well being of others and demonstrate compassion and empathy for those who are in distress or suffering, whether they are patients or colleagues, faculty or staff, and regardless of circumstance: personal, professional, academic or otherwise.

### **Duty and Responsibility**

We hold ourselves accountable for our duties as learners and junior health care providers, whether that be through personal development and self-directed learning or dedication to the core curriculum to address our weaknesses for future practice with an understanding of our limitations at every level of our learning. We recognize that these limitations must be understood and made explicit especially in the context when people we interact with can misunderstand our role as students. We do not separate our responsibilities as learners with our duty to clinical care; at our level of education we acknowledge both as crucial educational experiences. Lastly, we acknowledge that it is our responsibility to bring to attention misconducts or harassments that limit our functioning and learning.

### **Presentation**

With the acknowledgement of dedicated dress codes in professional, academic and clinical settings, we recognize that our appearance depicts our individuality and is an important means for self-representation. Understanding that our appearance is the first impression we give to others, in any situation in which we represent our university and/or our profession we dress in accordance with the principles outlined above, with the intent of maintaining and developing the strong reputation Dalhousie Medicine holds while maintaining our individuality and self-respect.

### **Social Events and Web 2.0 Applications**

While acknowledging the value of social networking, whether online or in physical group settings, we appreciate that these settings have potential for public display of unprofessional behaviours. Whether that is due to posting pictures of patients with or without their consent, commenting on identifying information and clinical findings specific to patients, accepting as 'friends' patients or persons under your care; we recognize that there is a need for boundaries between professional and personal settings and that in many of these contexts the lines can be blurred and vigilance is necessary to ensure that trust and confidentiality is maintained and fostered. It is important for the personal development of many students to participate in social events associated with medical school and it is not the intention of this document to in any way impede participating in any of those experiences with an understanding that we are constantly in the public eye, whether literally or in cyber-space.

### **Response to Unprofessional Behaviour**

Understanding the importance of the principles outlined above, we appreciate the avenues already in place by the Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine to respond to misconducts, harassment and unprofessional behaviour that affects our academic, physical and mental wellbeing. Such avenues as Student Affairs, the Office of Undergraduate Medical Education and the PIETA program of peer counseling can be contacted when issues of professionalism affect our day-to-day functioning.