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POLICY TITLE: STUDENT PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND Demeanor

The purpose of this policy is to define what professional conduct consists of and what is considered unprofessional conduct. Further, the policy serves to convey to UH CON's students that they are representatives of the University and College of Nursing and their conduct and demeanor may affect the judgments of others about the College of Nursing in a positive or negative manner.

CON students are expected to be thoughtful and professional when interacting with faculty, patients and their families, nurses, attending physicians, nursing preceptors, affiliated institutional staff, other students, the public and other members of the health care team.

Behavioral/Emotional Expectations Required of Nursing Students

Students must exercise sound judgement and the timely completion of responsibilities in their programs/areas of study. Further, students must be able to maintain mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, students, faculty, staff, other professionals, and agency personnel under all circumstances, including highly stressful situations. Students must have the emotional stability to function effectively under stress and adapt to environments that may change rapidly without warning and/or in unpredictable ways as relevant to their programs or areas of study. Students must be able to demonstrate empathy for the situations and circumstances of others and appropriately communicate that empathy. Students must acknowledge that values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and experiences affect their perceptions and relationships with others. Students must be able and willing to examine and change behaviors identified by their faculty when they interfere with productive individual or team relationships. Students must demonstrate effective and harmonious relationships with the diverse academic, professional, and community environments relevant to their chosen programs of study.

Professional Conduct

Students must possess the ability to reason morally and practice nursing in an ethical manner. They must not engage in unprofessional conduct, or any act that may be detrimental or harmful to the health, safety and welfare of a patient, student, or faculty member. Students must be willing to learn and abide by professional standards of practice as well as regulations for professional licensure. Students must demonstrate the attributes of compassion, integrity, honesty, responsibility, and tolerance.

This professional behavior is to be maintained in any and all situations where the student is identified as a UH CON student, including situations off-campus, as well as in "virtual" sites, such as online social networking sites. Professional conduct and demeanor is required of students in cyberspace and social media in the same manner it is required in all others settings. Students must keep in mind that behaviors that are illegal or in violation of University policy on campus will be illegal or violate University

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policy if it occurs and/or appears on-line. If a student identifies as a CON student in an online forum, the CON will hold them to the highest standards of professional conduct. While it is not the policy of CON faculty to routinely monitor students' social media, if inappropriate postings are brought to their attention, Program Directors will investigate the report. In addition, it is requested that students refrain from "friending" faculty members, members of clinical affiliates, or patients on social media while they are enrolled at the CON.

Guidelines for Professional Communication

The UH CON upholds the American Nurses' Association rules for Professional Conduct and Demeanor and the *American Nurses' Association's Principles for Social Networking* in any physical or virtual setting. This includes the following:

1. Nurses must not transmit or place online individually identifiable patient information (this includes photographs of any kind).
2. Nurses must observe ethically prescribed professional patient-nurse boundaries.
3. Nurses should understand that patient, colleagues, institutions, and employers may view postings.
4. Nurses should take advantage of privacy settings and seek to separate personal and professional information online.
5. Nurses should bring content that could harm a patient's privacy, rights, or welfare to the attention of appropriate authorities.
6. Nurses should participate in developing institutional policies governing online conduct.

In order to comply with these expectations:

1. Recall that standards of professionalism are the same in any environment or circumstance including online.
2. Do not share or post information or photos gained through the nurse-patient relationship.
3. Maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media. Online contact with patients blurs this boundary.
4. Do not make disparaging remarks about patients, peers, staff, faculty, employers or co-workers, even if they are not identified.
5. Do not take photos or videos of patient on personal devices, including cell phones.
6. Promptly report a breach of confidentiality or privacy.

Violations of Professional Conduct and Demeanor

Inappropriate behaviors include, but are not limited to, the use of offensive language, gestures, or remarks, coercion and or character assassination of peers, faculty, or other providers. Illegal conduct that violates HIPAA includes, but is not limited to, disclosure of patient information, including discussions with other persons and/or posting online photographs of patients. Attempting, directly or

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indirectly, to obtain or retain a patient or discourage the use of a second opinion or consultation by way of intimidation, coercion or deception, is also inappropriate and unprofessional conduct.

The College of Nursing reserves the right to permanently dismiss, without the option for readmission, any student whose behavior is deemed to threaten the welfare of any individual or whose behavior is deemed unsafe in any manner. Violations of Professional Conduct and Demeanor will result in sanctions up to and including immediate dismissal from the nursing program, notification to the Board of Nursing, as well as, federal prosecution, fines, and imprisonment. Again, violations of this conduct can cause administrative withdrawal from the nursing program without the opportunity of readmission.

References

- American Nurses Association. (2011, September). Principles for social networking and the nurse. Silver Spring, MD: Author.
- National Council of State Boards of Nursing. (2011, August). White Paper: A nurse’s guide to the use of social media. Chicago, IL: Author.
- Clark, C. (2008). The dance of civility in nursing education as described by nursing faculty and students. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 32(4), E37-E54.
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