MD: Medical Student Mistreatment Reporting and Monitoring Policy

I. Student Mistreatment Definition

As explained in our Abusive Conduct (https://hr.wustl.edu/items/abusive-conduct-policy/) and Discrimination and Harassment (https://hr.wustl.edu/items/discrimination-harassment-policy/) policies, the School of Medicine is committed to maintaining an environment free from behavior that is abusive, discriminatory, or harassing or that involves the mistreatment of students or others in the learning and working environment. For definitions and examples of conduct that would be considered mistreatment prohibited by the university, please refer to these policies.

This document identifies the mechanisms and protocols for students to report mistreatment against them or for other individuals to report student mistreatment they have observed. This document also outlines the systems in place aimed at monitoring, addressing, and preventing the mistreatment of students in the learning environment.

II. Steps for Reporting Student Mistreatment

The School of Medicine strongly encourages students who feel they have experienced mistreatment — and those who feel they have witnessed mistreatment of a student — to report it immediately, without fear of retaliation, using the following resources:

1. WashU Confidential Concern Reporting Portal
   Students and other community members may submit a report through the WashU Confidential Concern Portal (https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/57349/). Washington University Human Resources receives all reports and will direct these reports to appropriate university or hospital administrators for a prompt response. The reporting portal allows for individuals to submit concerns anonymously, if preferred, and it allows for bidirectional communication through the portal via a password, even if the report is submitted anonymously.

2. Any of the following deans:
   - Senior Associate Dean for Education (https://education.med.wustl.edu/about/leadership-team/)
   - Associate Dean for Student Affairs (https://md.wustl.edu/resources/offices-and-contacts/office-of-medical-student-affairs/)
   - Associate Dean for Medical Student Education (https://md.wustl.edu/resources/offices-and-contacts/medical-student-education/)

Confidentiality and Anonymous Reporting

When receiving a confidential report, the university will strive to protect, to the greatest extent feasible, the confidentiality of persons reporting mistreatment and of those accused of mistreatment. Because of legal obligations, the university cannot guarantee complete confidentiality where it would conflict with the university's obligation to investigate meaningfully or, where warranted, to take corrective action. For example, if a report identifies conduct that would fall within Title IX (https://hr.wustl.edu/items/discrimination-harassment-policy/), the university may have an obligation to investigate and take further action that requires disclosure of all or part of the information contained in the report to the person accused as well as to appropriate administrators. In addition, if a report identifies conduct that poses a significant threat to the health or safety of an individual, the university may also need to investigate and take further action that requires the disclosure of information contained in the report.

Even when some disclosure of the university's information or sources is necessary, it will be limited to the extent possible. The university will keep confidential all records of complaints, responses, and investigations to the extent permitted by law.

Anonymous reports may be submitted through the reporting portal. If a reporter wishes to remain anonymous, the university may be limited in its ability to respond and take action with respect to the report.

III. Options for Possible Resolution

Students who believe they have been subjected to mistreatment or other reporters who believe they have witnessed student mistreatment have several options available if they wish to seek resolution of a situation. At any time, they may consult with a Discrimination and Harassment Response Coordinator (see below), whose responsibilities include assisting students, faculty, and staff with questions regarding university policies and options for addressing concerns about mistreatment.

If a student or reporter feels comfortable dealing with the situation without assistance, they can communicate either orally or in writing with the person whose behavior is of concern. The most useful communication clearly describes the conduct of
concern as well as its impact on the student and a request that the behavior should stop. Frequently, such a communication will cause the behavior to stop, particularly when the person may not be aware of its impact.

If a student or reporter would like to discuss a situation and possible options for resolution with the assistance of someone else, they may also consider the following: (1) asking a trained WUSM SAFE (Supporting A Fair Environment) Committee member to meet with them or to speak to the person whose behavior is of concern; or (2) consulting with one of the advisers listed below about other potential options to remedy the situation. As previously mentioned, these individuals may be obligated to report the incident or conduct disclosed to the university for further review (e.g., sexual assault or harassment, threat of harm to self or others).

Students may also initiate a more formal complaint process, which could involve a committee hearing, by contacting a Discrimination and Harassment Response Coordinator. If it has not already done so, the university will initiate an investigation into the allegations under the appropriate policy and, if substantiated, take disciplinary action as contemplated by the applicable procedures. For example, if a student asserts that a faculty member has engaged in mistreatment in the form of sexual harassment, the university’s Discrimination and Harassment Policy would be followed.

The university will remain in communication with the student throughout the university’s investigation and response. The university may be limited in its ability to disclose personnel information or other action taken in response to a complaint. The university will only be able to return communication made by anonymous reporters if the reporter creates a password and logs back into the reporting portal to access information about the incident.

IV. Monitoring and Education

The School of Medicine will provide ongoing education to promote a respectful and positive learning environment. The purpose of this education will be to communicate the school’s standards of behavior and professionalism for an optimal learning environment and to commit to informing students and educators about policies around behavioral expectations and processes for reporting mistreatment. The policies and reporting protocols will be posted in the Bulletin and in the course syllabi, and they will be reviewed with students during orientation.

Data from the reports submitted to the portal and to the deans identified above will be aggregated for review by the SAFE Committee. The SAFE Committee will systematically review these data on a regular basis, in addition to internal and external survey data, when doing the following: (1) assessing trends and the overall climate in learning areas at the School of Medicine; (2) making any recommendations for changes to the policies and the reporting and response mechanisms in place; and (3) developing action plans to implement targeted educational interventions based on the data received. The SAFE committee will regularly report its findings and recommendations to the Academic Affairs Committee and to the Committee on Medical Student Education (COMSE). Aggregate reports will also be regularly forwarded to department chairs for monitoring purposes.

V. Medical Student Advisers

The following is a list of faculty advisers who may provide guidance when addressing some of the potential issues discussed in the above guidelines:

- Senior Associate Dean for Education (https://education.med.wustl.edu/about/leadership-team/)
- Associate Dean for Medical Student Education (https://md.wustl.edu/resources/offices-and-contacts/medical-student-education/)
- Associate Dean for Student Affairs (https://md.wustl.edu/resources/offices-and-contacts/office-of-medical-student-affairs/)
- Faculty Coaches (https://sites.wustl.edu/gatewaycurriculum/curriculum-renewal-update-gateway-coaching-program/)
- Gender Equity and Title IX Compliance Office (https://titleix.wustl.edu/)
- Discrimination and Harassment Response Coordinator (https://hr.wustl.edu/items/discrimination-harassment-policy/)
- School of Medicine Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (https://diversity.med.wustl.edu/)

VI. Additional Resources

- Medical Student Ombudsperson (Confidential Adviser) (https://ombuds.med.wustl.edu/)
- Medical Student Peer Advocates (https://md.wustl.edu/resources/wellness/)
- Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center (https://students.wustl.edu/relationship-sexual-violence-prevention-center/)

The Medical Student Mistreatment Reporting and Monitoring Policy was last approved by the Academic Affairs Committee on August 12, 2021. All substantive edits to this policy require approval by the Academic Affairs Committee.