

(H) Honor Code

STUDENT HONOR CODE of the ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE

ARTICLE I - PURPOSE

Medicine is, at its center, a moral enterprise grounded in a covenant of trust. By its traditions and very nature, it is a special kind of human activity – one that cannot be pursued effectively without the virtues of humility, honesty, intellectual integrity, compassion, and effacement of excessive self-interest. These traits mark physicians as members of a moral community dedicated to something other than its own self-interest.

Excerpted from the Patient-Physician Covenant
Ralph Cramshaw, M.D.

As students of medicine and of the medical sciences, we embrace the foregoing physician statement and hereby acknowledge the confidence that has been bestowed upon us along with all the responsibilities attendant with this privilege. As future physicians, teachers and scientific investigators, we recognize the importance of conducting ourselves at the highest level of professional ethics and our duty to serve our mentors, our colleagues and ultimately our patients.

It is in this spirit that we affirm the Student Honor Code of the Albany Medical College and agree to abide by the principles and requirements as set forth in the following document.

ARTICLE II - SIGNATURE

Section 1. Applicants who have been accepted by the Albany Medical College (hereafter, “the College”) shall be required to forward with their letter of intent and tuition deposit, a signed statement to the effect that they have read the “Student Honor Code of the Albany Medical College” (hereafter, “the Honor Code”) included in the College’s notification of acceptance, and that they pledge to abide by that code and its procedures.

Section 2. All incoming students shall be required to participate in an introduction to the Honor Code seminar during which time the philosophy and operational requirements of the Honor Code will be presented and discussed. The seminar will conclude with a ceremonial signing of the Honor Code.

Section 3. The promise to uphold the Honor Code shall remain a continuing obligation which extends throughout the years of medical and graduate training. From this it follows that the rules and tenets of the Honor Code shall apply with equal force in the classroom, the hospital, the laboratory, and the community. In every instance that the student affixes a signature to any piece of academic, clinical or research work, that student is reaffirming this commitment to the Honor Code.

ARTICLE III - VIOLATIONS

Section 1. Students who through their actions or inactions exhibit a lack of moral judgment which calls into question their fitness for the practice of medicine or scientific research shall be considered to be in potential violation of the Honor Code. In determining whether a potential violation of the Honor Code has occurred, students should be guided by principles of professional ethics, a commitment to fairness and by common sense.

Section 2. The establishment of an Honor Code violation by the Honor Committee shall be based upon a careful consideration of the circumstances of each particular case. As such, it is neither possible nor desirable to compile an exhaustive list of all such infractions. However, the following acts shall serve as illustrations and as a partial listing of presumptive Honor Code violations:

A. Attempting to transmit or receive unauthorized information during any examination or otherwise submitting another student's course work as one's own;

B. Intentionally falsifying or misrepresenting any entry into a patient's clinical record or into a researcher's laboratory notebook;

C. Acting in a flagrantly disrespectful or disruptive manner towards patients, faculty or peers;

D. Plagiarizing, misappropriating or otherwise failing to properly acknowledge the use of another person's words, ideas, or research;

E. Performing clinical or research activities with gross negligence;

F. Lying to faculty members, College or hospital administrators, or College committees or councils;

G. Engaging in acts of vandalism or theft of College, hospital or private property;

H. Failing to promptly report, in accordance with Article IV of this document, any apparently substantive violation of the Honor Code that is based either on direct eyewitness observations or upon a good faith and reasonable belief that a potential violation has occurred.

ARTICLE IV - PROCEDURES

Section 1. Whenever a student believes that the Honor Code has been violated, that person is obliged to personally provide a signed, written report describing the offense and naming the offending student or students. The Honor Committee further reserves the right to accept reports of alleged violations from members of the community at large. Reports shall be delivered to a member of the Honor Committee who will present the report in confidence to the Honor Committee no later than the next regularly scheduled meeting. Any further discussion of the alleged violation(s) is prohibited outside the proceedings of the Honor Committee.

Section 2. When the above mentioned signed statement is reported to the Honor Committee by the receiving member, the Honor Committee shall meet in confidence to determine by a majority vote of all of the members, a quorum being present, whether the events described therein would be a violation of the Honor Code if the events did in fact take place. If it is determined that the events would not constitute a violation of the Honor Code, the accuser(s) shall be notified that the matter shall be dropped entirely by the Honor Committee, and all documents concerning the event possessed by the Honor Committee shall be destroyed. If it is determined that the events would constitute a violation of the Honor Code, the Honor Committee shall meet in confidence with the accuser(s), the accused, and with all individuals whose statements are deemed potentially relevant by the Honor Committee. This hearing shall take place no later than the next regularly scheduled Honor Committee meeting.

Section 3. At least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the time designated in accordance with Article IV, Section 2 herein, for the accused to meet with the Honor Committee, the accused shall be advised in writing of the allegation(s) made against him or her (along with the identity of the individual(s) making the accusation). The document containing the allegation(s) shall be personally delivered to the accused. In the event that the accused cannot be located with due diligence, the requirement of this section shall be deemed met when the aforementioned document is placed in the message (mail) box of the accused at the

College. Should the accused be absent from the College for good reason (i.e., leave of absence, clinical elective, etc.), the accusation shall be forwarded to the accused and the proceedings delayed until such time as the accused can be present.

Section 4. Should the accused decline to meet with the Honor Committee on the appointed date, the Honor Committee shall be empowered to proceed in accordance with Article IV, Section 5, without the accused.

Section 5. During a hearing of the accusations and their defense, the Honor Committee shall collect and weigh the facts and decide whether or not the evidence is sufficient to warrant further action.

A. If the Honor Committee decides there is not substantiation of the charge(s), or that the charge(s) is(are) of a frivolous nature or based upon misunderstanding, the matter shall be dropped entirely and the Honor Committee shall destroy all records in its possession which relate to the case. The Honor Committee shall inform the Dean's Hearing Committee of the decision in a manner which maintains the confidentiality of the involved parties.

B. If the Honor Committee decides that there appears to be substantiation of the charge(s) and that the charge(s) is(are) not frivolous or based upon misunderstanding, the Chairman of the Honor Committee shall report to the Dean's Hearing Committee on the next working day in accordance with Article IV, Sections 6 & 7.

Section 6. The Honor Committee's report to the Dean's Hearing Committee shall include a description of the charges heard by the Honor Committee as well as recommendations for further procedure or sanction. Such recommendations will be forwarded from only those members present at the hearing of the case. The report to the Dean's Hearing Committee shall include a taped recording of testimony given during the Honor Committee hearing if one was made in accordance with the Honor Committee By-laws, together with all documents received and relied upon by the Honor Committee.

Section 7. The Honor Committee, in its entirety or representatives thereof, shall stand ready to discuss the facts of the case as gathered by the Honor Committee with the Dean's Hearing Committee, or designated members thereof.

ARTICLE V - HONOR COMMITTEE

Section 1. The Honor Committee shall be composed of two members from each of the four medical school classes and two members from the graduate student body attending the Albany Medical College. Quorum will be a simple majority of the whole Honor Committee.

A. Medical College Representatives: The first year class will elect two members for a one-year term at the beginning of their school year. At the end of the first year, the first year class will elect one member for a two-year term and one member for a one-year term, and then each succeeding year will elect one member to serve for a two-year term or until graduation.

B. Graduate School Representatives: The graduate student body will elect two students each year to serve one-year terms as Honor Committee Representatives.

Section 2. The Honor Committee shall explain the philosophy and mechanics of the Honor Code to the entering first year class and graduate students and all others newly subject to this code in accordance with Article II, Section 2.

Section 3. The Honor Committee shall function as a strictly fact-finding body, making no judgments of culpability or recommendations for discipline except as described and required by the Honor Code.

Section 4. The Honor Committee shall schedule meetings regularly at a frequency of no less than once per month. It will be the Honor Committee Chairman's prerogative to cancel a meeting for which there is pending business.

Section 5. The Honor Committee may survey examination procedures as they pertain to the Honor Code and make recommendations to the Dean's Hearing Committee or designated members thereof.

Section 6. The Honor Committee shall meet annually prior to the graduation of the fourth year students to elect a Chairman and Co-Chairman for the following year.

Section 7. Actions taken by the Dean of the College as a result of the Honor Committee findings shall be posted as provided for in the Honor Committee By-Laws. Individuals involved shall not be named.

Section 8. The Chairman or a designated member of the Honor Committee shall appear at the Student Council meeting following the Honor Committee's January and May meetings to provide a summary of the year's activities, preserving the anonymity of the involved persons as well as to discuss problems that have arisen with the mechanics of the Honor Code. The student body will be invited to attend these meetings. A copy of this report and the recommendations of the Student Council shall be forwarded to the Dean's Hearing Committee, which shall maintain its availability for student review.

Section 9. The Honor Committee shall invite two (2) members of the rank of Associate Professor or above to sit with the Committee at all proceedings in a non-voting advisory capacity. One advisor shall be invited from the clinical and the other from the pre-clinical/research faculty. The term of each faculty advisor shall be three years.

Section 10. The Honor Committee shall have legal counsel available upon request, but such counsel shall not be present at inquiry proceedings of the Honor Committee.

Section 11. A member of the Student Council shall be invited to attend meetings during which no confidential information is to be discussed for the purpose of fostering better communication with the student body at large.

ARTICLE VI - DEAN'S HEARING COMMITTEE

Section 1. The Dean's Hearing Committee shall serve as an advisory panel to the Dean of the College and shall be composed of the Executive Associate Dean of the College, the Honor Committee Chairman, and those members of the faculty or administration that the Dean of the College shall choose to appoint. The Honor Committee and the Student Body affirming this document recommend that the Dean's Hearing Committee also include the Senior Associate Dean for Education Programs and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

Section 2. The Dean's Hearing Committee, or designated members thereof, shall review the report and recommendations of the Honor Committee and report to the Dean of the College the recommendations of the Honor Committee along with the final recommendations of the Dean's Hearing Committee as to what sanctions, if any, should be administered.

Section 3. The Dean of the College shall have the authority to impose sanctions against students found to be in violation of the Honor Code by the Honor Committee and the Dean's Hearing Committee. Sanctions imposed by the Dean may include, but are not limited to the following:

A. Ethical Counseling: Those found to be in violation of the Honor Code may be assigned to work with members of the Ethics faculty in a manner to be prescribed by the Dean's Hearing Committee. Failure to comply with this remediation may result in further sanctions.

B. Closed Letter: A letter describing the events which constituted the Honor Code violation shall be placed in a sealed envelope and kept in a closed file in the Executive Associate Dean's office. If no further violations of the Honor Code are committed, the contents of the Closed Letter shall be destroyed upon graduation (or transfer) from the College. The Closed Letter shall convert to an Open Letter (see below) if the student is subsequently found to be in violation of the Honor Code.

C. Open Letter: A letter describing the events which constituted the Honor Code violation shall be added to the student's College file. This Open Letter shall be made available to all parties with a legitimate claim to the information (e.g. residency program directors) at the discretion of the Dean's Hearing Committee as composed at the time disclosure is sought.

D. Suspension/Expulsion: Egregious violations of the Honor Code which clearly indicate a lack of fitness for participation in the medical or medical sciences profession may result in Suspension or Expulsion from the College.

Section 4. In order to assure the sound administration of the College, the Board of Trustees and the Dean of the College reserve the right to take immediate or other actions with respect to illegal or unethical conduct by Students of the College apart from the Honor Code and its procedures.

ARTICLE VII - AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Amendments to the Honor Code may be proposed by any member of the College Student Body, Faculty or Administration by presenting the proposed Amendment to an Honor Committee Representative.

Section 2. Proposed amendments which are approved by a three-fourths majority of the Honor Committee shall be forwarded by the Honor Committee to the Office of the Dean for the purpose of obtaining institutional governance approval from the Academic Governing Council. Revisions to proposed amendments made during this process must be approved by a three-fourths majority of the Honor Committee.

Section 3. Amendments to the Honor Code which meet the requirements of Article VII, Section 2 must be affirmed by a simple majority of the registered medical and graduate students of the Albany Medical College in a referendum administered by the Honor Committee.

Section 4. Honor Code amendments affirmed by the Student Body shall take effect immediately after being approved by the Academic Governing Council and the Board of Trustees of the College.