

# Development of a code of conduct for the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of British Columbia

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## Abstract

Much has been written in the literature about the process of inculcating professional values and behaviours in pharmacy students. Before exploring how to develop student professionalism, the attributes and behaviours that constitute professionalism must be defined. The Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of British Columbia (UBC) began by establishing a Professionalism Committee that undertook a rigorous process to develop an operational definition of professional conduct. With broad based input, a comprehensive Code of Conduct for members of the Faculty community, namely faculty, staff and students, was developed. The process to develop and adopt the Code, the challenges encountered along the way, and proposed next steps are discussed.

**Keywords:** code of conduct, committee, behaviour, honour code, pharmacy, professionalism

## Introduction

Ongoing concern has been expressed in the pharmacy literature about the decline in the professionalism of pharmacy students and much has been published on whether enough effort by faculties and schools of pharmacy is being made towards fostering professional conduct (Hammer *et al.*, 2003; Duke *et al.*, 2005; Chisholm *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, the significance of professional socialisation, defined as the complex process by which students acquire the behaviour, skills and knowledge pertaining to a profession, as well as the values, attitudes, sense of identity and pride, has been well described in the literature for many health care professions, including pharmacy. (Carter *et al.*, 2000; Nesler *et al.*, 2001; Page, 2005; MacLellan *et al.*, 2011; Vaidyanathan, 2015). Whilst student values, beliefs and expectations begin to form before they enter their training programs and continue to develop over the course of their professional careers, the education process, the role models that students are exposed to, and the environment within which they learn shape the way students internalize a professional culture. (Hammer, 2000). The professional culture of pharmacy includes norms such as the way a pharmacist interacts with patients or colleagues, opinions on how challenging situations are handled, the way the pharmacist presents him/herself to the public, *etc.*

Collaborative efforts to enhance student professionalism encourage pharmacy schools to impart professional

attitudes and behaviour in student pharmacists and challenge the common belief that these traits cannot be taught because they are already intrinsic to students prior to entering professional programs (APhA-ASP/AACP-COD Task Force on Professionalism, 2000). The concern about the professionalism of pharmacy students and the role that academic programs can play to foster professional conduct have led to the development of position papers such as the White Paper on Pharmacy Student Professionalism, which encourages schools of pharmacy to develop comprehensive initiatives and programs to address student professionalism, and The Pharmacy Professionalism Toolkit for Students and Faculty, a collaborative effort of the American Pharmacists Association-Academy of Student Pharmacists and the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy Council of Deans to provide a resource on how to effectively promote and assess professionalism (Jungnickel *et al.*, 2009; APhA-ASP/AACP Committee on Student Professionalism, 2009).

The Accreditation Standards and Guidelines for the Professional Program in Pharmacy for US schools state the need for pharmacy schools' values to include a commitment to a 'culture that, in general, respects and fosters professionalism, ethical behaviour, leadership, and scholarship' and that 'Faculty, administrators, preceptors, and staff must be committed to developing professionalism and fostering leadership in students and

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to serving as mentors and positive role models for students' (Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education, 2007). Similarly, in Canada, the Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs (CCAPP) sets as one of its standards the requirement that faculties provide an environment that promotes professional conduct (The Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs, 2012). In addition, CCAPP recommends that faculties 'provide an environment and culture that promote professional behaviour and harmonious relationships among students, faculty, administrators, preceptors, and staff' and that 'facult(ies) implement strategies and activities to strengthen the professional culture of the student experience' (The Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs, 2012). The Association of Faculties of Pharmacy of Canada outlines the expectation of professionalism as one of seven educational outcomes for first-degree pharmacy programs, and The Blueprint for Pharmacy, a national initiative to align pharmacy practice with patients' health care needs, has a Framework of Professional Practice that describes the expectation of professionalism (Canadian Pharmacists Association, 2008; Association of Faculties of Pharmacy of Canada, 2010). Although there are no proven methods for enhancing professional socialisation, it has been suggested that recruitment programs with an emphasis on the professional aspects of pharmacy, the use of honour codes, and student involvement in professional organisations are examples of tools that can help foster professional attitudes and behaviours in academic programs (APhA-ASP/AACP-COD Task Force on Professionalism, 2000; Hammer, 2000).

The Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of British Columbia (UBC) began engaging in discussions about professionalism in early 2010 during the initial stages of development of a new Academic Strategic Plan, which included a recommendation for enhancing the culture of professionalism. Since then, we have undertaken a rigorous process to explore how professionalism is addressed in our curriculum, the perceptions of professionalism of our faculty members and students, and how to best enhance our current efforts to establish a culture that fosters professionalism. It has been evident through these efforts that more emphasis on professionalism is required throughout the curriculum. We believe that if students are exposed to ongoing longitudinal and insightful dialogue, reflection, and activities about professionalism during their training, they will perceive that professionalism is important. In addition, professionalism must be highlighted in both academic and non-academic activities (Hammer et al., 2003). Our internal review also highlighted the need to enhance modelling of professionalism by faculty members in order to cultivate a stronger and more sustained culture of professionalism in our students.

Outcomes of this work resulted in the establishment of a Professionalism Committee in the spring of 2012. The Committee was charged with providing leadership in the development, implementation and oversight of

professionalism events and activities in the Faculty and within the curriculum, establishing mechanisms to recognise and administer awards for professionalism, and developing an operational definition of 'professional conduct' in the form of a Code of Conduct (CoC).

The literature encourages schools and colleges of pharmacy to develop codes of conduct or honour codes to help guide how a particular institution defines professional conduct, and to use them as a means to inculcate the profession's attitudes, values, and behaviours in students (Hammer, 2000; APhA-ASP/AACP-COD Task Force on Professionalism, 2000). Research has demonstrated that the establishment of honour codes can be effective in promoting academic integrity and positive attitudes and behaviours not only of students but also of faculty members (Bok, 1990; McCabe et al., 2002; McCabe et al., 2003).

The Faculty's Professionalism Committee determined that of the tasks at hand, the development of a CoC would be the first priority as it would 'set the stage' and inform all other tasks. Up to this point, all new students received a copy of a Student Handbook, which contained a Student Professionalism Policy and a Pledge of Professionalism that was recited by the first year students at the White Coat Ceremony, but we had never had a document outlining expectations around conduct. Considering the fact that professionalism is more 'caught' than can be 'taught', and that students are professionally socialised largely through experiences outside of the classroom, in the experiential portion of the curriculum, and via faculty encounters, the Professionalism Committee determined the need to model, foster, and articulate the values, standards, and expectations of members of our Faculty community in upholding professional attitudes and behaviour (Piascik & Lubawy, 2003). We aimed to develop a CoC that would serve as a framework to educate students and enhance professionalism in the learning environment, rather than as a punitive tool to measure lapses in conduct. We determined that without a clearly agreed upon definition of professional conduct, it would be unfair and confusing to students to be called on any unprofessional actions or behaviours. We aimed for the CoC to serve as a tool to use in mentoring students who fall short of the expectations. We believe that by clearly outlining expectations set not only for students but also for all members of the faculty, role modelling would be enhanced and student professionalism would be positively impacted.

We developed and implemented a CoC that applies to all members of the Faculty community, namely faculty, staff, and students. The purpose of this paper is to describe the process that was undertaken, the challenges we encountered along the way, the ways in which the CoC has been used in the Faculty since its implementation, and some proposed next steps in our efforts to enhance the culture of professionalism. We hope to also provide insight into a process that could be emulated at other institutions.

## Methods

The Professionalism Committee was composed by the Chair inviting select individual faculty members and staff representing a wide range of Faculty disciplines and interests to contribute to this effort. The Committee, comprised of one staff and ten faculty members, began the work of developing a CoC by conducting a review of the literature in this area and an environmental scan of existing honour codes and codes of conduct from faculties and schools of Pharmacy in Canada and in the United States via a search of various institutions' websites. The UBC Faculties of Medicine and Dentistry's document outlining professional standards for their learners and faculty members was also reviewed. To help guide the reviews of these existing documents by Committee members, the following questions were generated: What elements of the format/structure of the document do you like? If applicable, what do you think of the process for monitoring adherence to the code described in the document? What elements of the content and language used in the document do you like? Would something similar to this document be relevant, worthwhile, and doable for our Faculty's CoC? The process of reviewing the literature and the features of existing CoC resulted in our Committee developing a clear sense of the basic elements that were deemed to be relevant and important for inclusion in our CoC.

The Chair of the Professionalism Committee ascertained the views of all faculty members on professionalism and professional conduct via individual interviews. Prior to each interview, the following questions were emailed to the interviewees for consideration: How can we best cultivate a stronger and more sustained culture of professionalism in our students? How are we doing in terms of professionalism amongst the Faculty and within the student body? How can we best incorporate professionalism values into our curriculum? How can we enhance Faculty modelling of professionalism? Participants' views and opinions were collected, qualitatively analyzed into themes, and presented to the Faculty as raw, unedited, and anonymous data. These data informed the Committee's deliberations around the need for, structure of, and the content of the first draft of the CoC.

Two presentations were subsequently delivered to all faculty members and staff to frame the project and to highlight the findings from the interviews.

From the environmental scan of existing CoCs and the internal Faculty discussions, a draft list of tenets to include in the CoC was developed. Each Committee member was assigned a specific tenet and was asked to develop the expectations around that tenet. The content and components of each tenet that were considered important were then evaluated and considered collectively. The final list of tenets and the content within each evolved during discussions and via consensus amongst Committee members. The diversity in the Committee members' background and experience as well as the wide discipline/program/interest representativeness that its members provided contributed to the process.

The Committee sought input on the list of tenets from each of the groups within the Faculty to whom the document would apply, in order to strengthen the meaning of developing an operational definition of conduct specific to our Faculty. In addition, it was felt that the Code would have wider acceptance amongst students if they had input into its development. To this end, a series of small group discussions with students from all four years of the entry-level degree baccalaureate program were conducted to collect data on their views on professional conduct. Feedback gathered from these discussions informed the development of the first draft of the CoC. Consideration was given to whether student participation should be on a volunteer basis versus via a randomly selected group of students from each of the years. It was decided that randomly selecting students from each of the years would be preferable to volunteers, and would avoid the perception that only 'keen' students' views would be represented.

Using a computer generated random list of numbers matched to the alphabetical listing of students in each of the years, we randomly selected 30% of students from each year to be invited to participate. During the group discussions, participants were arranged into groups of 4-5 students to work through four activities designed to explore the meaning of professionalism, define professional conduct, and provide input into the development of the CoC. In the first activity, each group was asked to write attributes and behaviours descriptive of 'professionalism' and 'professional behaviour' by considering the meaning of the words in the context of "*A professional is someone who is/does...*". In the second activity, students were shown a somewhat ambiguous photograph of a 'professor' (a non-recognisable individual, from outside the Faculty) sitting at his desk while a 'student' (a non-recognisable individual, from outside the Faculty) is reviewing a marked exam. While the 'student' is viewing the exam, the 'professor' is using his iPad. The intention was to capture student views on whether the behaviour is appropriate (e.g., the professor taking time to review the exam with the student and he searches for the answer to a question on his iPad) or inappropriate, given the displayed lack of interest by the professor. In the third activity students were shown a photograph of a 'professor' and a 'student' dialoguing with a blank 'bubble' in between. Students were asked to consider their observations if they were to witness this interaction, and any professional aspects of the interaction. The final activity involved a fictitious scenario where students had to assist in hiring a new faculty member by developing a description of the 'ideal' candidate's attributes.

The Committee considered the information gathered from the student discussions as it developed the first draft of the CoC. At this stage, wider student feedback was solicited using the 'Student Pipeline', an electronic means for students in the entry-level degree program to provide feedback to the Faculty on matters of concern. It consists of the Year Representatives, those serving on the Student Council plus sufficient additional members of each year to make up a team of approximately ten students per year.

When providing input, each member of the Student Pipeline is expected to consult with approximately ten classmates.

Graduate and Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) student input was obtained via separate in-person discussions between the Chair of the Professionalism Committee and the students in each of these groups (57 Graduate and eight PharmD students). In addition, a separate session was held with the 17 students enrolled in the Faculty's Canadian Pharmacy Practice Programme, designed for internationally-trained pharmacists who want to achieve the competencies for practice in Canada and Canadian-trained pharmacists who want to re-enter pharmacy practice in British Columbia after a prolonged absence. Prior to each of these sessions, the draft CoC was circulated electronically to the respective groups.

The Committee considered all the feedback gathered from the various student groups as it revised the first draft of the CoC. The second draft CoC was circulated to faculty members and staff via email for comment and feedback. Based on feedback received, the document was further revised and re-circulated prior to a meeting where all faculty and staff were invited.

In total, the Professionalism Committee met for five two-hour meetings over the course of five months. At each meeting the group deliberated on the feedback received and made revisions to the document accordingly. The last meeting involved a discussion on the steps that would be required to have the document officially approved by the Faculty and subsequently by the University Senate. It was decided that a Faculty vote would be held at the February 2013 monthly Faculty Advisory Council meeting. This council provides input to the Dean on academic and other matters in the Faculty. Subsequently, the document was forwarded to the University's Academic Policy Committee and the Senate for approval, which was received in September 2013.

## Results

Forty-seven (100%) of faculty members invited by the Chair of the Professionalism Committee to take part in the interviews to ascertain views on professionalism and professional conduct participated. The themes that emerged from the comments and suggestions gathered from the interviews are shown in Table I.

The Professionalism Committee reviewed a total of eleven honor codes and codes of conduct from faculties and schools of pharmacy across the US and Canada, five specific documents outlining expectations around dress code, six documents outlining processes for tracking adherence to codes, and six documents which had unique aspects to them such as examples of professional behaviors (e.g., Creighton University School of Pharmacy and Health Professions) (Creighton University School of Pharmacy and Health Professions Professionalism Workgroup, 2004). Various student and faculty pledges of professionalism were examined (e.g., University of Toledo College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences) (The University of Toledo College of Pharmacy

**Table I: Themes and views emerging from interviews with faculty members.**

Theme	Views expressed
Definition of 'Professionalism'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An agreed upon definition of professionalism is needed and we all need to be on board with it.</li> <li>Our Faculty needs to buy into a policy on professionalism.</li> </ul>
Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is great discordance amongst faculty members with setting boundaries.</li> <li>There are inconsistencies regarding conduct, rules, and deadline extensions that contribute to student lapses in professionalism.</li> <li>We need to agree on principles and expectations, and enforce a set of <i>Faculty</i>-wide (rather than course specific) consistent expectations.</li> <li>Set the tone early in first year, with clear expectations and ensure compliance with them.</li> </ul>
Student Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students lack accountability.</li> <li>Our students don't have a clear professional identity.</li> <li>There is a significant difference in student attitude between required and elective courses.</li> </ul>
Modeling Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are not unified in how we model professionalism.</li> <li>Students pick up on faculty member's behavior. Faculty members need to be better role models when it comes to differences of opinion at meetings.</li> </ul>
Student Presence at Faculty Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student representatives should not be regularly invited to faculty meetings due to their lack of context and since faculty members may hold back on discussions when students are present.</li> <li>If students come to faculty meetings, they need to be coached pre- /post-meetings.</li> </ul>
Professionalism in the Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A longer orientation program for first year students is required.</li> <li>Professionalism is currently covered in a "spotty" manner. A course / theme of professionalism that encompasses all 4 years is needed.</li> <li>Reflective space within the curriculum to discuss professionalism is required (e.g., opportunities for reflection on inconsistencies between what they learn and what they see on rotations to bridge the gap between the ideal and the real).</li> <li>We currently address professionalism punitively. We need to frame it in a non-punitive, consistent, sustainable way.</li> <li>We need to address professionalism in electronic communication and social media.</li> </ul>
Teaching Evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students can be unprofessional in their feedback and there are no consequences for this as the teaching/ course evaluations are anonymous.</li> <li>Students need coaching on how to provide constructive feedback.</li> <li>Students need to be held accountable for their comments.</li> </ul>
Dress Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are receiving an inconsistent message regarding dress code within the lab courses but they see a wide range of Faculty attire in the hallways.</li> <li>We need to improve our image. We need to look and act more professionally.</li> </ul>
Recruitment and Admission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We need to be more rigorous in our admission process by selecting students who have the attributes of a professional.</li> <li>In our recruitment efforts we need to emphasize the message that our program trains students to become professionals.</li> </ul>
Student Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A professionalism committee should establish a formal non-punitive mentoring program.</li> <li>More peer-modeling by senior students is needed.</li> </ul>

and Pharmaceutical Sciences, 2005). From this review, the Committee developed the following key guiding principles for the development of a CoC: (i) faculty, staff, and students would have significant input throughout the process; (ii) it would: apply to students as well as all who interact with them (*i.e.*, faculty and staff); (iii) it would contain a preamble to set the tone for the document; (iv) it would outline expectations that would apply across all settings, including the classroom and experiential training sites; (v) it would be concise and written using the first person language; (vi) it would contain a glossary of terms; and (vii) it would contain a section requiring a signature (by faculty, staff, and students) to indicate commitment to the Code. Committee members also agreed that the intention would be for the Code to outline the Faculty's expectations around professional conduct, not to outline procedures for lapses in conduct.

The Committee decided that the purpose of the CoC would be to enhance a culture of professionalism for our Faculty community and to make the principles and responsibilities of professionalism clearly understood by all. We agreed that the introduction to the CoC should set the tone for the document. In it, we would highlight the fact that, consistent with the expectations of all professionals, members of our Faculty community would be expected to exhibit the highest standards of conduct in the areas of teaching, learning, practice and research. The introduction would emphasise the need for everyone who works and trains in our environment to advocate, practice, and model professional attitudes, behaviours, and values, and to foster the development of the highest ethical and professional standards in our students. It would explain that the CoC is not intended to establish measures that address lapses in conduct but rather to outline expectations for conduct that apply in addition to existing policies of the University and within specific courses and programs in the Faculty related to conduct and evaluation of professionalism. Since our Faculty is diverse and many members are not licensed pharmacists, it would also allude to the fact that any faculty member registered with the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia (CPBC), the provincial licensing body, and any learner entering the profession must abide by the standards of conduct and performance as well as the Code of Ethics adopted by the CPBC for pharmacy professionals (College of Pharmacists of British Columbia, 2011). As such, we determined that the CoC would be considered, when applicable, in addition to the standards set out by the CPBC as well as those of the profession as a whole. Lastly, it was determined that it would be important to clarify that the intention of the Code is to outline minimum standards for members of our Faculty community, and that it would apply to activities at the University as well as externally, when conducting business under the auspices of the Faculty.

Following the introduction, the statement "Members of the UBC Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences are expected to commit to the following" would precede the following draft list of twelve tenets which included: (1) Accountability; (2) Communication; (3) Honesty,

Personal and Academic Integrity, Honour; (4) Conflict of Interest; (5) Justice, Fairness, Principles of Social Justice, Respect for Diversity, Citizenship, Cultural Competence, Social Awareness; (6) Constructive Evaluation of Self and Others; (7) Care, Compassion; (8) Commitment to Excellence, Self-improvement, Self-Direction, Life-Long Learning, Maintenance of Competence and Knowledge; (9) Confidentiality; (10) Civility, Respectfulness, Politeness, Courtesy, Punctuality, Conflict Resolution; (11) Engagement in relations between students and supervisory faculty; and (12) Dress code.

Sixty-six volunteer students from the 95 students invited (69%) from all four years in the entry-level baccalaureate degree program agreed to take part in the group discussions (15 students from first year, 20 from second year, 10 from third year, and 21 from fourth year), representing 8.8 % of the entry-level degree student population.

The following is a list of terms generated by the students during the activities designed to define professionalism in a faculty member:

- respectful and polite
- non-judgmental
- accountable for actions
- professionally dressed
- ethical and having integrity
- reliable and punctual
- knowledgeable, competent and current in their practice / field
- open-minded
- honest, responsible
- helpful and considerate
- life-long learner who demonstrates work-life balance
- receptive to feedback
- understanding of diversity
- good communicator

The entry-level degree students expressed concern that they might be 'targeted' through a CoC and they emphasised the desire to see a document that would set equal expectations and be applicable to faculty and staff as well as students. They envisioned a non-punitive document aimed at raising awareness of expected conduct in the form of a guide for professionalism. They emphasised the need for students to receive constructive feedback on observed lapses or areas needing improvement as well as to recognise students displaying outstanding professionalism.

When circulated for comment to the faculty members and staff, the first draft of the CoC was received with general support; however, concern regarding some of the wording and fear of the Code setting expectations beyond those in the University's Faculty Collective Agreements were expressed. For instance, in the introduction, the first draft

of the document included the statement ‘In this Code we outline the minimum standards that all members of the Faculty must abide by while participating in teaching, learning, research, and social endeavours within the Faculty or during activities in settings under the auspices of the Faculty’. The use of the phrase ‘abide by’ raised concern amongst some faculty members, and resulted in the wording being revised to suggest that the purpose of the Code was to outline ‘expectations’. In addition, many were opposed to the Code requiring a signature to indicate a commitment to it, as they feared that a perceived ‘breach’ of conduct would impact their “academic freedom” and negatively affect their merit or promotion. Another point of concern expressed by many faculty members was the inclusion of a dress code. Many viewed this as an infringement on academic freedom and felt that it would interfere with their human rights. The student groups consulted, as well as the staff, echoed this concern.

Given the concerns expressed about requiring a signature to indicate commitment to the CoC, the Committee agreed that fundamentally there would be an expectation from the Faculty to abide by the Code whether signed or not, much like other existing UBC policies which do not require signatures. It was decided that making direct reference throughout the document to relevant UBC policies might help override the concerns raised about ‘academic freedom’. The Committee decided to revise the CoC by removing the signature requirement and the dress code portion in order to broaden its acceptance. To address the concerns of a small number of faculty members regarding the Code setting expectations beyond those in the University’s Faculty Collective Agreements, the Faculty Association of UBC, an organisation that facilitates faculty member’s social, employment, and collecting bargaining relationships with the University, was consulted. Upon review of the Code, the Faculty Association questioned the reason for including staff in the groups to whom the document would apply. This concern was resolved by explaining our goal of developing a document that would apply to the whole Faculty community, and in particular, to all who interact with students (*i.e.*, faculty and staff). The Association also offered minor suggestions on the wording of the document.

The feedback received from the various groups also helped to further refine the list of tenets to the following more succinct and alphabetically presented list: (1) Accountability; (2) Care and Compassion; (3) Civility, Respectfulness, Courtesy, Punctuality, and Conflict Resolution; (4) Excellence, Self-improvement, and Life-Long Learning; (5) Communication; (6) Confidentiality; (7) Appropriate Consideration of Conflict of Interest; (8) Constructive Evaluation of Behaviour in Self and Others; (9) Honesty, Personal and Academic Integrity, Honour, and (10) Justice, Fairness, Respect for Diversity, Citizenship, Cultural and Social Awareness.

The newly revised document was circulated electronically to all faculty members and staff for their review prior to the February 2013 Faculty Advisory

Council meeting. At the meeting, a brief outline of the revisions and consultation processes undertaken to address these concerns was presented by the Committee Chair. Following a brief discussion, the document was put to a vote, which resulted in a recommendation to the Dean that the CoC be approved and forwarded to the University Senate. Subsequent to the Faculty’s approval of the document, it received University Senate approval in September 2013. The approved final version of the CoC can be found in Appendix A.

## Discussion

In reviewing the literature for others’ experiences in developing honour codes and codes of conduct, we found that the process we followed was unique in that it included input from staff, and significant consultation with students from all programs in the Faculty; we also set out to obtain University Senate approval of the document.

Most honour codes and codes of conduct from other schools of pharmacy reviewed by our Committee have established formal processes for dealing with suspected violations, complaints, or lapses in professional behaviour. Many codes outline sanctions, grievances and hearing procedures to address violations. In fact, the main focus of many codes in pharmacy schools and colleges appears to be around student cheating and plagiarism. We chose not to follow suit, as the intention for our CoC was to enhance a culture of professionalism and to make the principles and responsibilities of professionalism clearly understood by all. It was not designed to establish measures for lapses in conduct but rather to outline expectations for conduct that would apply in addition to existing policies in specific courses and programs within the Faculty. Within UBC there is a collective responsibility to maintain a high level of integrity and standards to which students are expected to adhere.

Traditionally in our Faculty, and unchanged by the establishment of the new CoC, lapses in student conduct are handled by the appropriate instructor and/or course coordinator in speaking with the student directly about the potential impact of their behaviour with respect to themselves, their peers, the profession, *etc.* The intent is to engage the student in a reflection of the incident and about expected professional behaviour. The Associate Dean Academic is consulted if the behaviour is serious and requires permanent documentation in the student’s file, or if the faculty member feels that the issue is unresolved. Together, the course coordinator and the Associate Dean Academic develop strategies to address the issue. Only if the student’s behaviour is deemed to be severe enough to require intervention will the Associate Dean consult with existing University policies.

Thus, the Professionalism Committee decided that our Faculty would continue to handle lapses in student professionalism on a case-by-case manner rather than via a set of outlined steps in the Code. In addition, specific courses have unique professionalism requirements that students must abide by, including a dress code,



appropriate communication, and attendance in the experiential and professional practice courses. Since December 2011, students who have been unsuccessful in an experiential course are referred to the Student Success Program (SSP), the Faculty's multifaceted remedial program. Upon developing an individualised learning plan, students engage in self-directed learning and development over an average of four-eight months. Feedback, mentoring and coaching are provided to ensure adequate competency, comprehensive knowledge, and professionalism. Although professionalism hasn't been the main deficiency identified in the nine students who have been referred to the SSP to date, many aspects of professionalism such as professional communication and etiquette have been a significant part of the remedial program in some cases.

As with the case of a student lapse of professionalism, we don't have a formal process to address a student's concern about a faculty member or staff's conduct. Students are encouraged to informally address their concerns with a faculty member who may be in the role of advisor, a course coordinator, or the Director of Student Services. In very unique and rare cases, the Office of the Dean becomes involved on an as-needed basis, with no specified written policies other than those outlined by the University.

In developing the CoC, our Committee engaged in many discussions and consultation about the authority that the document would carry and whether an official mechanism to address unprofessional behaviour should exist. It was clear from the discussions that faculty members did not feel comfortable establishing a formal process to address perceived lapses in professionalism with faculty members or staff. On the other hand, they felt that there could be merit in developing an online system to track student's lapses in professionalism as well as instances of noted outstanding student behaviour. It was felt that such a system could assist in identifying students who could benefit from mentoring at an early stage, using a non-punitive, coach-model approach, as well as identify those student who may be worthy of recognition for their outstanding professionalism.

It has been suggested that the development of a code of conduct is an essential part of fostering personal and professional integrity in students (Davis *et al.*, 1995). Whether there is evidence that codes of conduct can enhance a culture of professionalism remains unclear. The published research in this area focuses on the positive effect that codes of conduct have on the academic integrity of students in the form of cheating and plagiarising (Roig *et al.*, 2006; Boothe-Perry *et al.*, 2010). McCabe *et al.* studied the influence that an honour code experience (having studied in an academic environment with honour codes) has on an individual's subsequent ethics-related behaviours in the workplace (McCabe *et al.*, 1996). They suggest that an academic environment that has a code of conduct may have a lasting effect on the integrity of its graduates in their subsequent workplace. However, there is agreement in the literature that codes of conduct can facilitate and have a positive

effect on institutional culture, the development of students' value systems, and enhance their personal responsibility and accountability, all of which can contribute to professionalism (Davis *et al.*, 1995; Turner *et al.*, 2003). The development of our CoC is one of many efforts of our Faculty Professionalism Committee to cultivate a stronger and more sustained culture of professionalism in our students.

The literature is inundated with definitions of professionalism yet there is no consensus on any one definition. However, there is agreement that it is imperative for faculties and schools of pharmacy to define professionalism to follow students' progress in this area (Thompson *et al.*, 2008). Our Faculty's Professionalism Committee's task of developing a document that formally outlines the Faculty's expectations around conduct for members of our Faculty community is complete. The Committee's next steps include further exploring options to track student professionalism throughout the program, building upon the existing SSP program by establishing a robust mentoring program, and developing an adjudication process for recognising outstanding professionalism in our students. The Faculty has also begun to address some of the other issues that were raised by faculty members during the interviews. For instance, there are initiatives underway to improve the current system of teaching evaluations and to revise our admissions process.

Since its approval, the CoC has been the subject of discussions with students as part of a new series of sessions on ethics and professionalism within the first year curriculum. These sessions represent an expansion in the number of hours dedicated to these topics in the past. The plan is to further expand the curricular content in this area into the other years of the program to ensure that student awareness of the meaning and importance of professionalism is reinforced throughout the entire curriculum.

In addition to its inclusion in the curriculum, the CoC has also been brought into the discussion that the Office of the Dean had with a faculty member who displayed unprofessional conduct, and it has been included in the student handbooks and orientation materials for all programs as well as the orientation package provided to new faculty and staff hires. In an effort to communicate our expectations around professional conduct to the community, future hires, and incoming students, the CoC has been made available on our Faculty's website.

## Conclusion

With broad-based input from faculty, staff and students, the UBC's Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences has undertaken a rigorous process to develop a Code of Conduct (CoC) that applies to all members of the Faculty community. Development of the CoC required considerable effort and generated some controversy. Although challenging, we see our CoC as a necessary foundation for future efforts to foster and enhance professionalism.

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## **APPENDIX A - UBC Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences Code of Conduct**

### **UBC FACULTY OF PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES CODE OF CONDUCT**

*Last Revised: 2013-08-28*

*Approved by UBC Senate: 2013-09-18*

#### **Introduction**

The Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at UBC is strongly committed to excellence and leadership in the areas of teaching, learning, practice and research. Consistent with the expectations of all professionals, all members of the Faculty are expected to exhibit the highest standards of conduct. While each member of the Faculty has his/her own set of personal beliefs and values, there is a set of professional standards expected of everyone who works and trains in our environment.

As recognised leaders for pharmacy education, research and practice, all members of the Faculty are ambassadors for our core values. They are committed to advocating, practicing, and modelling the attitudes, behaviours, and values of professionals and, as such, developing in learners the highest ethical and professional standards. When accepted into our Faculty, all members embark on a journey to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that will foster excellence. We view the need to uphold these standards as a component of that journey.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to enhance a culture of professionalism for all members of the Faculty and to make the principles and responsibilities of professionalism clearly understood by all. It is not intended to establish measures that address lapses in conduct but rather to outline expectations for conduct that apply in addition to existing policies and evaluation mechanisms in specific courses and programs within the Faculty. The Code was developed by the UBC Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences Professionalism Committee in consultation with faculty members, students, and staff.

We recognise that any faculty member registered with the College of Pharmacists of BC and any learner entering the profession must abide

by the standards of conduct and performance as well as the Code of Ethics adopted by the College. Thus, this Code of Conduct must be considered, when applicable, in addition to the standards set out by the College as well as those of the profession as a whole.

This Code outlines minimum teaching, learning, practice, research and social standards for all members of the Faculty. These standards guide Faculty activities that occur both at the University and in outside settings when conducted under the auspices of the Faculty. In addition, all members of the Faculty are expected to abide by all the policies of the University relating to conduct:

The Glossary of Terms at the end of this document provides an alphabetical list of terms that appear italicised throughout this Code, with accompanying contextual definitions and explanations.

For more information, please contact the Office of the Dean.

<sup>1</sup> This includes but is not limited to: Policy #3 - Discrimination and Harassment; the UBC Statement on Respectful Environment for Students, Faculty and Staff; Policy #97 - Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment; the Student Conduct During Examinations section of the University calendar; the Student Conduct and Discipline sections of the University calendar; and Policy #85 - Scholarly Integrity.

#### **Affirmation of the Commitments of Faculty, Staff and Students at the UBC Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences**

Members of the UBC Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences are expected to commit to the following:

##### **1. Accountability:**

- Being accountable for performance and decisions, and accepting responsibility for the resulting outcomes.
- Practicing within the scope of knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Being accountable to instructors, colleagues, peers and/or learners for adhering to these standards.

##### **2. Care and Compassion:**

- Demonstrating care and compassion.
- Conducting and participating in the classroom with compassion, acceptance, interest and insight for learners' developing potential.
- Expressing commitment to wellbeing, learning and development through positive influence, role modeling, mentorship, and empathy.
- Encouraging intellectual, personal, and professional growth.

##### **3. Civility, Respectfulness, Courtesy, Punctuality, and Conflict Resolution:<sup>2</sup>**

- Fostering an atmosphere of civility and respect in the academic, research, experiential, workplace, community and online environments<sup>3</sup>
- Embracing a standard of behavior that reflects a conscious demonstration of mutual respect of others including, but not limited to, cooperation, consideration, tolerance, politeness, acceptance, inclusiveness, kindness, courtesy and patience.
- Contributing to a respectful atmosphere conducive to learning by being punctual, collegial, attentive, interactive and supportive.
- Respecting the personal (physical, mental, psychological and spiritual) and professional boundaries of others.<sup>3,4</sup>
- Resolving conflicts collaboratively, non-defensively, and respectfully in order to achieve solutions that satisfy all parties involved.

##### **4. Excellence, Self-improvement, and Life-Long Learning:**

- Maintaining professional competence related to knowledge and abilities as new medications, devices, and technologies are developed, and as the provision of healthcare advances.

- Maintaining skills, abilities, and scholarship related to teaching and learning.
- Maintaining and enhancing personal competence through commitment to lifelong professional development and practice evaluation.
- Reflecting critically on personal actions and seeking to improve proficiency in all facets of responsibility.

#### 5. Communication:

- Using *professional verbal, written, and nonverbal communication* in all interactions with instructors, colleagues, peers and/or learners.
- Using social media responsibly by refraining from posting information that is untruthful, hurtful, or disrespectful. In addition, agreeing to observe the guidelines of the University relating to social media.<sup>5</sup>
- Displaying attentive behaviour in the classroom and during meetings by not talking while another person is talking, keeping all conversations focused on learning and meeting material only, and refraining from activities such as emailing, watching movies, instant/text messaging, and Internet browsing.
- Respecting questions and concerns raised by instructors, colleagues, peers and/or learners.

#### 6. Confidentiality:

- Maintaining confidentiality by limiting discussions of sensitive matters pertaining to learners and/or colleagues (*e.g.*, performance reviews, discipline, evaluations) to necessary instances, in appropriate settings, and only with appropriate individuals such as supervisors and course coordinators.
- Taking precautionary measures to ensure confidentiality when communicating with other learners about matters relating to the content of examinations.
- Taking precautionary measures to ensure confidentiality such as using secure means of communicating.
- Acting in accordance with obligations imposed by being a member of a disciplinary or admissions committee related to communication of personal information or performance.

#### 7. Appropriate Consideration of Conflict of Interest:<sup>6</sup>

- Disclosing and managing all conflicts of interest, whether potential, actual or apparent.
- Not engaging in sexual or romantic relations when there is a supervisor/supervisee relationship.
- Not engaging in exploitive relationships with colleagues, learners, patients, or their families for emotional, financial, research, educational or sexual purposes.
- Not influencing academic decisions for others where personal relationships exist.
- Refraining from using Faculty or University resources for personal gain.<sup>3,7</sup>
- Never misrepresenting personal interests as being those of the Faculty or University.

#### 8. Constructive Evaluation of Behaviour in Self and Others:

- Accepting of limitations/errors committed and seeking to improve these.
- Accepting feedback and making appropriate changes in behaviour accordingly.
- Developing and implementing self-learning and self-improvement strategies based on identified limitations.
- Providing objective, fair, and timely constructive feedback of all members of the Faculty as required.

#### 9. Honesty, Personal and Academic Integrity, Honour:<sup>8,9,10</sup>

- Personally demonstrating professional and academic integrity and fostering integrity in others within the Faculty and the professional community.
- Being vigilant, and acting upon any observation or evidence of a violation of integrity or of the professional or academic principles embodied by this Code.
- Learning and upholding professional standards of learning and academic work.

#### 10. Justice, Fairness, Respect for Diversity, Citizenship, Cultural and Social Awareness:<sup>4</sup>

- Not discriminating or intimidating in any actions or interactions with others on the basis of race, religion, color, sexual orientation or other areas covered under human rights legislation.
- Respecting the rights, privileges and property of all members of the Faculty.
- Not making derogatory comments or displaying derogatory behaviors towards others.
- Showing awareness of and commitment to health professionals' responsibilities and obligations to society.

#### Glossary of Terms

- **Member of the Faculty:** an individual who works and/or learns under the auspices of the UBC Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences (includes faculty members, staff, and learners of all programs within the UBC Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences).
- **Learner:** an individual enrolled as a student of any program within the UBC Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences.
- **Professional verbal, written, and nonverbal communication: verbal and written communication** (in the form of email, discussion boards, blogs, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) that is non-judgmental, that takes into consideration the format and style of writing based on whom it is intended for; communication that clearly and professionally expresses ideas using appropriate grammar, language and tone; communication written with consideration for whether it will be read in the intended way; communication which includes proper salutations at the start and end of the text based on whom it is intended for; communication that does not contain profane or slang language; communication provided in a timely manner. Nonverbal communication that is free of signals such as gestures, posture, tone of voice, lack of eye contact, and body movements that are intended to convey lack of respect, professionalism, interest or respect.
- **Classroom:** any room or venue, including tutorial rooms, laboratories, seminar rooms, virtual classrooms, experiential sites where learners acquire knowledge and/or skills and/or where learning or the exchange of ideas takes place.
- **Violation of integrity:** cheating, plagiarism, facilitating academic dishonesty, abuse of academic materials and property, stealing, or lying.

2. See UBC Statement on Respectful Environment for Students, Faculty and Staff

3. See UBC Calendar Policies and Procedures: Student Code of Conduct.

4. See UBC Policy 3 and the B.C. Human Rights Code.

5. See UBC Social Media Guidelines.

6. See UBC Policy 97, Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment.

7. See UBC Policy 16, Non-University Use of University Services and Facilities.

8. See the Student Conduct During Examinations section of the University calendar.

9. See the Student Conduct and Discipline sections of the University calendar

10. See UBC Policy 85, Scholarly Integrity.