September 1, 2010

Dear Faculty and Academic Staff:

All of us share an interest in creating an optimal working environment for our academic activities. The University has promulgated a series of policies to assure that the workplace, in addition to being academically productive, is free of bias, conflict, and other detriments to a healthy working environment. In fact, I believe that academic work and the environment in which it occurs cannot be separated; one relies on the other.

Deans are expected to inform faculty and staff of policies and procedures that they may not be routinely aware of or perhaps last encountered when they began their employment with the University. For these reasons, I have enumerated below eight important policies about personal and professional conduct, followed by web site references.

1. **Sexual and Verbal Harassment**
   Any one of us may be a victim of harassment, may be accused of harassment, or may be consulted by someone who thinks s/he has been harassed. The laws and policies dealing with sexual harassment address two kinds of relationships within the university: workplace relationships and learning relationships. Many of us have responsibilities both as employers/co-workers and as teachers/academic administrators. Each of us has a duty to act responsibly when confronted with the issue of sexual harassment. The School has created the Sexual Harassment Resource Team (SHRT). SHRT members are available to anyone who wants to inquire about sexual harassment, discuss an incident or receive information about options for resolving complaints. For information on SHRT, contact the SMPH ombuds at rgarner@wisc.edu. Information on campus resources can be found at [http://www.oed.wisc.edu/sexualharassment/](http://www.oed.wisc.edu/sexualharassment/)

2. **Consensual Relations**
   The university and any reasonable person will presume that the ability to make objective decisions is compromised if there is a romantic and/or sexual relationship between two individuals who have a reporting or evaluative relationship. There is almost always a power differential between such individuals, which not only obscures objectivity but influences perceptions of consensuality. The individual with the power or status advantage is always accountable and should take appropriate action to remove the conflict of interest by reporting the relationship to his or her supervisor. [http://www.oed.wisc.edu/sexualharassment/consent.html](http://www.oed.wisc.edu/sexualharassment/consent.html)

3. **Nepotism**
   To avoid conflict of interest, any University appointing authority or supervisor related by blood, marriage, or adoption to a job applicant, or having close relationship with emotional ties to an applicant, must not participate either formally or informally in the decision to hire or determine the salary of that other person. [http://www.ohr.wisc.edu/polproced/uppp/1502.html](http://www.ohr.wisc.edu/polproced/uppp/1502.html)

4. **Research Conflict of Interest**
   A potential conflict of interest exists when an investigator has significant financial interests which could lead an independent observer to reasonably question whether the design, conduct or reporting of research might be influenced by the possibility of personal gain (individual or immediate family). A disclosure form must be filed annually. [http://www.rsp.wisc.edu/coi/index.html](http://www.rsp.wisc.edu/coi/index.html)

5. **Scientific Misconduct**
   The University has long recognized that honesty is an essential component of scholarly activity. Misconduct in scholarly research is defined as “fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the scholarly community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research. It does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data.” Lack of integrity in this area reflects not only on the individual but also on the Medical School and the University. [http://www.secfac.wisc.edu/governance/legislation/Pages300-399.htm#314](http://www.secfac.wisc.edu/governance/legislation/Pages300-399.htm#314)
6. **Reporting Requirements on Absences**  
Faculty and academic staff are required to turn in monthly leave reports (whether or not any leave has been used). With your supervisor’s or department chairperson’s approval, full-time staff may carry over up to 176 hours of unused vacation from one fiscal year to the next. Unused vacation balances in leave accounts which are not up to date will not be permitted any carryover vacation.  
[http://www.uwsa.edu/hr/upgs/upg09.pdf](http://www.uwsa.edu/hr/upgs/upg09.pdf)  
Staff must inform their department chair of planned absences by filing a Faculty Absence Reporting Form. Doing so protects staff members who are off campus conducting university business and are therefore covered by university liability coverage. It is also very important to understand the limitations of using colleague coverage and the very few situations where this is appropriate.  

7. **Privacy of Patient Care Information**  
Confidentiality of patient records and information is an important aspect of our clinical practice and research programs. Custodians of patient information (UWHC, Meriter, UWMF) have specific policies regarding patient confidentiality. Be sure to familiarize yourself with these policies as breaches of confidentiality are taken very seriously.  
[http://www.wisc.edu/hipaa/](http://www.wisc.edu/hipaa/)  

8. **Professionalism in the Workplace**  
UW Health (The UW School of Medicine and Public Health, the UW Hospital and Clinics, and the UW Medical Foundation) is committed to ensuring a professional and collegial environment for learning and patient care in all sites throughout the State of Wisconsin. Professional ethical and collegial behaviors are core attributes of excellence in learning and clinical environments. The two documents that provide guidelines in this area can be found on the following website:  

For additional information or for situations not addressed above, you can also contact:  
- Associate Dean for Administrative Affairs, Elizabeth Bolt, 265-9441  
- Ombuds Rosa Garner, 265-9666  

Three other documents that provide additional information regarding important policies related to recruitment, reappointment, evaluation, and other employment related issues are:  

Faculty Policies and Procedures  
[http://www.secfac.wisc.edu/governance/FPP/Table_of_Contents.htm](http://www.secfac.wisc.edu/governance/FPP/Table_of_Contents.htm)  

Academic Staff Policies and Procedures  
[http://acstaff.wisc.edu/doc.html](http://acstaff.wisc.edu/doc.html)  

Unclassified Policies and Procedures  
[http://www.ohr.wisc.edu/polproced/UPPP/UpppTableofContents.htm](http://www.ohr.wisc.edu/polproced/UPPP/UpppTableofContents.htm)  

Thank you for your attention to these important issues.  

Sincerely,  

[Signature]  
Robert N. Golden, MD  
Robert Turell Professor in Medical Leadership  
Dean, School of Medicine and Public Health  
Vice Chancellor for Medical Affairs