Assessing Professional Behaviors

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WMU Assessment in Action Day 2012
Assessing Professional Behaviors
March 23, 2012

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Assessing Professional Behaviors

- Focus on subjective behavior in professional programs
  - Not “objective” performance on evaluation tools
  - Classroom v. Clinical/Placement Setting
  - Goal is always, always student success . . . but sometimes they don’t . . . we provide opportunities, we do not guarantee outcomes
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- College/Department tools . . . (Global issues)
- Individual faculty members tools . . . (Local issues)
- University resources . . .
- General principles . . .
- A recent example . . .
- Question and answer . . .
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- College/Department Tools
  - Promotional materials should disclose that the curriculum has a subjective (clinical/field work) component as well as ethical/behavioral requirements
    - Specify nature of clinical/field work component and periodic review of progress includes that component
    - Direct prospective students to web site containing greater detail
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- College/Department Tools continued
  - Specify the origin of the ethical standards and emphasize importance
  - Create policies and a student handbook that incorporates those requirements and standards – Nursing has one
  - Important that we 1) tell the student what the standards are before they get here, 2) tell the student what the standards are when they are here, and 3) tell them we are enforcing the standards we told them about consistently and repeatedly
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- Individual faculty members tools
  - Wording subjective evaluations is as important as the evaluation itself
    - Be specific, avoid editorial comments, do not merely draw conclusions
      - “You displayed an angry and hostile attitude” v. “On March 28, 2011 during your geriatric field placement at the Friendship Village retirement home you spoke to the patient in a very loud voice, removed items from the hands of the patient without asking first, told the patient that her comments were ‘stupid’, talked over the comments of the patient without letting her finish her sentences, told her that you ‘hated’ working with patients like her, and called her a ‘silly old woman.’”
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- Individual faculty members tools continued
  - To the extent possible, include prior instances of similar behavior, prior remedial efforts on your part, and potential future consequences
    - i.e., “This is the second time in two weeks that you have been more than 30 minutes late to a field work placement site and have failed to call in and let the facility know you were going to be late. As I indicated after the previous incident on March 15, 2012, in order to successfully complete your field work, prompt attendance is required. If you are late one more time during this placement you will be brought before the Professional Concerns Committee.”
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- Individual faculty members tools continued
  - Consistency is important – similarly situated students should be treated similarly
  - Do NOT engage in informal psychological/medical diagnosis or suggest psychological/medical treatment for a poorly performing student
    - “you suffer from . . .
    - “you might benefit from . . .
  - Responding to student rebuttals . . . “yeah but’s”
    - If they allege a disability
      - We do not have to accommodate a disability retroactively
      - We have an office dedicated to administering accommodation (Disability Services for Students, www.wmich.edu/disabilityservices). Refer them to that service – you should never engage in an *ad hoc* accommodation
    - If they allege discrimination
      - Office of Institutional equity: http://www.wmich.edu/oie/
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- Individual faculty members tools continued
  - There are formal structures in place for students to appeal grades and program dismissals – you should stand behind good faith evaluations you make
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University Resources

- Disability Services for Students, www.wmich.edu/disabilityservices
- Ombuds for grade appeals:
  - www.wmich.edu/ombudsman/appeals.html
- Ombuds for late withdrawals:
  - www.wmich.edu/ombudsman/withdraw.html
- Discrimination, OIE: www.wmich.edu/oie/
- Lawyers – OGC: www.wmich.edu/gc/
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- General Principles
  - Be specific
  - Document
  - Be consistent
  - Discipline is always cumulative
  - Be firm – subjective evaluations are necessary
  - Be fair
A recent case Woodward v. Trinity Health
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Q & A . . .