Student Promotions And Evaluation (SPE) Committee

I. Purpose

The Student Promotions and Evaluation (SPE) Committee of the University of South Alabama (USA) Frederick P. Whiddon College of Medicine (COM) is charged with the responsibility for ensuring that each student in the Whiddon COM meets the requirements for promotion and graduation with the degree of Doctor of Medicine. The SPE Committee is also entrusted with the duty of rendering decisions regarding probation and potential dismissal of Whiddon COM students. The USA Whiddon COM provides every qualified student the opportunity to successfully complete the curriculum and graduate; however, the Whiddon COM reserves the right through the workings of the Committee to make judgments about who has or has not demonstrated the necessary qualifications to earn a degree and to practice medicine competently.

2. Applicability

The Committee's policies and guidelines apply to all Doctor of Medicine degree-seeking students admitted to the Whiddon COM.

3. Definitions

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records, granting parents and eligible students access to and control over those records.

Whiddon COM Executive Leadership Team (COM ELT): The COM ELT will be charged with carrying out functions related to the governance of the COM as required by the institutional bylaws and by the LCME.

Quorum: As related to meeting attendance, is established when one-half of the voting members plus one are present.

4. Policy Guidelines

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4.1 Name And Mission

This committee, composed of basic science faculty, clinical faculty, ad hoc members, and student representatives, will be known as the Student Promotions and Evaluation Committee. In addition to standing monthly meetings, the Committee will convene at least twice each academic year and as necessary to evaluate academic and/or professionalism issues as they relate to specific Whiddon COM students. The Committee is charged with recommending promotion, remediation, probation, or dismissal based on scholastic performance, professional behavior, and adherence to the Honor Code. After reviewing the

academic records of the M4 Whiddon COM students and certifying that those eligible have met the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Medicine, the Committee is charged with making the appropriate recommendations to the COM ELT for graduation. This certification serves as the validation presented by the Dean of the Whiddon College of Medicine to the University President and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees during the Commencement Ceremony.

4.2 Composition

The voting members of the Committee consist of faculty members from basic science departments and USA Health clinical departments, as well as students appointed from the Whiddon COM's M2, M3, and M4 classes. Non-voting members include the following from the Whiddon COM: Associate Dean of Medical Education, Associate and Assistant Deans of Student Affairs, Associate Dean for Health Advancement, Assistant Dean of Assessment and Evaluation, Director of Student Records and Engagement, and the Senior Associate Director of Financial Aid. Several ad hoc members are appointed from the faculty at large and are called upon emergently, if necessary, for a quorum. In the event that a voting member of the Committee leaves the university, resigns from the Committee, or fails to fulfill his/her responsibilities by being absent from meetings, the Committee Chair may request that another voting member be appointed.

4.3 General Policies

1. **Quorum is defined as one-half of the voting members plus one. If a quorum cannot be achieved, the Chair of the Committee may defer the meeting until a quorum is reached.**
2. **The Chair of the Committee is appointed through the Dean of the College of Medicine's office and has served previously as a sitting member of the Committee.**
3. **Administrative support to the Committee and its Chair is provided by the Whiddon COM's Director of Student Records and Engagement (hereinafter referred to as the Committee Coordinator) and by the Office of Student Affairs staff in preparing the agenda materials and sending meeting reminders.**
4. **The materials presented at the meetings are prepared by the Committee Coordinator and, as such, are FERPA-protected; members are reminded of the confidentiality of these materials.**
5. **Copies of correspondence to the student(s) regarding the Committee deliberations and recommendations are maintained in the student's official academic record housed in the Whiddon COM's Office of Student Records.**
6. **The Committee Coordinator, or their designee, is responsible for taking minutes during the meeting, which are therefore transcribed after the meeting and retained by said party.**
7. **If the Committee is meeting to review a specific academic or professionalism issue as it relates to a specific student, the student is notified in writing (via JagMail) and verbally, when possible, by the Associate Dean of Student Affairs or designee of the date, time, and place of the meeting, as well as the matter to be discussed.**
8. **Prior to the meeting, the notified student will have the opportunity to meet with the Associate Dean of Student Affairs or designee, the Associate Dean of Medical Education, and/or the Chair of the Committee to discuss the matter being called into question in an effort to prepare the student for potential questions. At this meeting, if specifically asked, the student can be informed of the potential outcomes of the Committee deliberations.**
9. **The student is invited and encouraged to attend the Committee meeting, although the Associate Dean of Student Affairs or designee will be present to discuss the matter regarding the student.**
10. **Regarding the meeting proceedings, the student may submit a written statement prepared in advance to the Chair of the Committee, may be present to read the statement, may present statements from others on his/her behalf, may appear in person to answer questions from Committee members, or may address the committee with an oral statement.**
11. **With prior consent of the Chair of the Committee and the Associate Dean of Student Affairs or the Associate Dean of Medical Affairs, the student may bring an advocate to the meeting who may appear with the student for support. The advocate must be approved by either the Chair or one of the aforementioned Associate Deans at least one business day in advance of the meeting. The advocate may answer questions from the Committee in the presence of the student if the student agrees. The advocate may not present written or oral statements on his/her own volition. Since these proceedings are those of an official Whiddon COM committee, not formal legal proceedings, no counsel representing the student is permitted.**
12. **The student whose record is being officially discussed is excused prior to the Committee's deliberations.**

13. Once the Committee has rendered its decision, the determination is entered into the minutes. The formal decisions of the Committee are communicated to the student in a timely fashion and, if possible, verbally by the Chair and at least one of the aforementioned Associate Deans. If time permits, every effort is made to verbally inform the student of the Committee's determination on the same day. Additionally, within two business days of the meeting, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs will prepare a written notification of the Committee's decision and recommendations, and will scan and email it to the student's university-issued JagMail account.
14. Guidelines and policies written in advance cannot possibly cover all scenarios that could be presented to the Committee. In its deliberations, however, the Committee should be guided by the following principles: fairness to the student, balancing the student's best interests with obligations to the Whiddon COM faculty, USA Health patients, physicians, and society at large; and confidentiality of proceedings.

4.4 SPEC Appeals Process

1. A Whiddon COM student has the right to appeal a decision of the Committee.
2. All appeals must be submitted to the Chair of the Committee in writing and within seven (7) business days of the initial notification. The Committee Chair will provide instruction and guidance to the student.
3. The basis of the written appeal can only be based on one of the following criteria: I. Occurrence of a substantial mistake of fact. II. Evidence of a fundamental misinterpretation of official policy. III. Occurrence of a significant procedural defect.
4. The student's written appeal will be considered by an ad hoc appeals committee comprised of three (3) members appointed by the Dean of the Whiddon COM from the voting members of the Whiddon COM ELT. No member appointed will have been involved in the initial Committee review, nor will the member be in a current evaluative role regarding the student.
5. The appeals committee will convene within seven (7) business days of being appointed to consider the written document prepared by the student. The student will be notified of the meeting. The student will be invited to attend the meeting and provide a statement or answer questions for clarification, but cannot present new evidence. The Chair of the Committee will be invited to address any questions related to policy or process. The appeals committee may either accept or deny the appeal.
6. If the appeals committee denies the appeal, the original Committee recommendation is forwarded to the Dean of the Whiddon COM. The Dean's decision is final, and there is no appeal.
7. If the appeals committee accepts the appeal, the committee's decision and outcome recommendations are forwarded to the Dean of the Whiddon COM. The Dean's decision is final, and there is no appeal.

4.5 Procedures

Cases For Referral To SPE Committee

1. V. Cases for referral to SPE Committee
   Marginal or unsatisfactory academic performance that falls below thresholds set for the given academic year (as set forth in rules for a given academic year, which may encompass USMLE Board Examinations, OSCE or Clinical skills deficiencies).
   Lapses in professionalism or breaches of conduct that may be reported through the Physicianship Early Concern (PEC) Notes or any other egregious behavior deemed by the Associate Deans of Student Affairs or Medical Education to warrant Committee review.
   Violations that are referred by the Honor Council.

Student Promotions and Evaluations (SPE) Committee policy