BC 10.110 - Academic Freedom and Integrity

I. POLICY:

Baystate Health follows the principle of academic freedom as expressed in Section 1.4 of the UMass Chan Medical School Academic Personnel Policy stating, "The standards and interpretations of the American Association of University Professors on matters of academic freedom as set forth in the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, with 1971 Interpretive Comment' serve as the basic guidelines for the maintenance of academic freedom at UMMS. Further, Baystate Health embraces the statement from the American Council of Education (ACE), joined by the American Academy of Medical Colleges (AAMC), which underscores the critical importance of academic freedom on institutions of higher learning. The ACE statement reads, "To best serve American society, higher education institutions are committed to transparent intellectual inquiry and academic excellence, free speech, and civil discourse. It is incumbent on our governmental institutions to share and support this commitment."

II. PURPOSE:

This policy establishes principles and guidelines of conduct with respect to academic freedom and integrity.

III. SCOPE:

This policy applies to any professional scholarly activity that incorporates an element of research or teaching associated with Baystate Health.

IV. PROCEDURE:

A. Publication

The researcher is entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other clinical and academic duties and compliance with institutional policies and practices.

The teacher is entitled to freedom in teaching subject to compliance with institutional policies and practices and must be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matters that have no relation to the subject.

Any professional activity, including research and teaching, associated with Baystate Health that results in personal financial gain requires appropriate institutional oversight.

B. Quality and Integrity

Baystate Health researchers and teachers assure quality and integrity in their research, education, and publications primarily by: self-regulation; adherence to individual ethical codes, federal regulations, professional standards, and institutional policies; and instilling the traditions and collegiality that characterize academic and research institutions. Professional associations have ethical codes and guidelines for the conduct of research, and BH faculty and staff are expected to comply with relevant professional standards. Violations of professional standards are a matter for peer review and censure. Scientific misconduct by a Baystate Health faculty or staff member is subject to institutional disciplinary action (reference BC 10.100 on Scientific Misconduct). Academic freedom affords no license for scientific misconduct.

C. Representative

Each faculty member at Baystate Health is a citizen, a member of a learned profession, and an officer of an academic, educational, research institution. When the individual speaks or writes as a citizen, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but the teacher's and researcher's special position in the community imposes special obligations. As a person of learning and an educational or research officer, individuals should be mindful that the public may judge the profession and the institution by their statements and writings. Accordingly, the individual should at all times be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and make reasonable effort to specify that the individual is not an institutional spokesperson.

D. Mentors

Faculty and staff in leadership, supervisory, research, and teaching positions at Baystate Health have a special obligation to foster academic integrity in their relationships and in their work. By virtue of their positions, they are mentors.

Their commitment to and examples of:

1) fastidious compliance with ethical standards;
2) exercise of appropriate supervisory and collaborative responsibilities with junior and senior associates;
3) elimination or management of conflicts of interest and commitment that is above reproach; and
4) good judgment in resisting assignments in which the number of collaborating investigators or volume of work is more than can be managed well, will be observed and modeled by others.

Faculty and staff shall always demonstrate responsibility and integrity in their leadership and service roles.

V. CROSS REFERENCES:

BC 10.100 - Misconduct in Research and Scholarly Activities
BC 10.400 - Disclosure of Financial Interests and Management of Financial Conflicts of Interest for U.S. Public Health Service Funded Research

VI. REFERENCES:

Volume IV: Faculty Affairs – Academic Personal Policy (Policy 04.01.01). Sections 1.6; 1.7
https://umassmed.sharepoint.com/sites/policies/SitePages/Vol4-Faculty-Affairs.aspx

The 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure with 1970 Interpretive Comments. https://www.aaup.org/file/1940%20Statement.pdf

APPROVALS:

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Approved:	Policy Management Committee	3/19/2024
Policy Owner:	Office of Research	
Originating Author/Title:	Paul Visintainer, PhD Director of Scientific Integrity and Analysis Epidemiology and Biostatistics Core; Office of Research	
Reviewers:	Paul Visintainer, PhD, Director of Scientific Integrity and Analysis Epidemiology and Biostatistics Core; Kevin Hinchey, MD, Chief Education Officer, BH; Jennifer Pacheco, MPH, CHRC, Chief Research Compliance and Integrity Officer	
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