



Special Committee on the RMC Environment Rush Medical College Policies and Procedures

Approved January 14, 2014

Background

While student mistreatment is rare, any occurrence is unacceptable and inconsistent with the RMC policy of zero tolerance of student mistreatment as described in the *Rush Medical College Teacher-Learner Relationship*. SCORE, the Special Committee on the RMC Environment, is charged with the review of student concerns regarding the learning environment and the development of action plans in response to episodes of alleged medical student mistreatment. A committee of students, faculty, and administration, SCORE works with the RMC community to promote a positive learning environment during all RMC-sponsored educational activities whether onsite or off campus.

SCORE represents one process for reporting and dealing with student mistreatment issues at RMC and Rush University and is one important part of the way in which RMC, Rush University, and Rush University Medical Center (RUMC) all work to address student complaints about mistreatment and optimize the learning environment throughout the institution. The RMC Dean's Office, RMC Office of Medical Student Programs (OMSP), RMC faculty and clerkship director offices, Rush University Provost's Office, and RUMC Department of Human Resources (HR) are also points of contact for student complaints about mistreatment. Along with SCORE, all such offices/departments maintain records of student mistreatment complaints, collate and report such complaints to OMSP, and help evaluate complaints for investigatory and disciplinary purposes.

SCORE is of unique and critical value to RMC, Rush University, and RUMC because it directly involves and empowers students to report, review, and resolve mistreatment claims. However, students should be aware that the full resources of RUMC, including RUMC senior leadership, support the process of addressing and redressing allegations of student mistreatment and improving student life. The process of dealing with student mistreatment at RMC has central oversight and coordination provided by the OMSP. Ultimate investigatory and disciplinary authority is supervised and handled by OMSP and other senior management of RMC and Rush University.

A formal investigation will be initiated when there are complaints involving RMC or RUMC staff, faculty, employees or students that form a possible violation of law, including sexual harassment; unwanted physical contact; discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, and/or sexual orientation; retaliatory action against a complainant; similar serious misconduct with legal repercussions; or incidents where there is an established pattern of repeated but less serious misconduct. In such circumstances, RUMC's HR and Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) shall be notified prior to the initiation of the investigation.

SCORE, the OMSP, and the Dean of RMC work together to assure that students, faculty and staff have a good understanding of SCORE's purpose and of available mechanisms for reporting. SCORE provides presentations at student meetings including orientations and class-specific Town Halls to describe and review reporting mechanisms and investigative processes. They also offer updates regarding the learning environment to the RMC Student Council as well as RMC's standing committees and the Dean's Council. The Dean will provide additional, periodic reports regarding the learning environment to the RMC community.

Mission of SCORE

- To create a welcoming environment for all students, faculty, and staff in order to better serve the educational goals of the medical college and to promote the Rush ICARE values and high quality patient care.
- To address student concerns about all forms of student mistreatment and other behaviors which inhibit the creation and maintenance of an optimal learning environment.
- To promote reporting by students and to eliminate barriers to reporting violations, including fear of retaliation, minimization of violations, or the belief that a report will not be acted upon.
- To provide ongoing education of students, residents, faculty, and staff about the importance of optimizing the learning environment, reporting episodes that undermine the creation of an optimal learning environment, and adhering to the protocols and procedures of SCORE.
- To manage the actions taken in response to reported episodes.
- To analyze data including student surveys, graduation questionnaires, course evaluations, and other data.
- To help maintain a central database tracking events and offenses for ongoing analyses as well as continued awareness and education in cooperation with the OMSP.

Meetings

The members of SCORE shall agree upon a monthly meeting day and time. Additional meetings may be called to address specific complaints or for other purposes of importance to the committee.

Composition and Leadership

SCORE shall include the following members:

- 12 RMC Students: Three students from the M1 and the M3 classes shall be elected by their respective classes to two-year terms in elections facilitated annually by the Office of Student Life.
- 5 Ex-Officio (non-voting) members: the SCORE Faculty Advisor (the Assistant Dean for Academic Development), the Ombudsperson (recommended by the Dean and approved by the committee), the Senior Associate Dean for Education, the Assistant Dean for Accreditation and Continuous Program Improvement, designated support staff from the OMSP.
- Other members may be approved by the members of SCORE.
- Two members of SCORE, one M2 and one M4, will be elected annually by the members of SCORE as Co-Chairs.

Sources of Data

In order to fulfill its mission, the following data shall be made available to SCORE:

- Direct student reports
- Course reviews
- Surveys conducted by the University
- Student focus groups led by students as needed
- The annual GQ (Graduation Questionnaire conducted by the AAMC)
- Other data deemed important by SCORE, the Dean, or the OMSP

Mechanisms for Reporting

SCORE and RMC have several mechanisms or channels for making student mistreatment reports. Mechanisms through which students or others may report incidents to SCORE that undermine development of an optimal learning environment include:

- the web-based tool maintained by SCORE;
- written reports in course reviews;
- written or oral communication with SCORE members, the Ombudsperson, any faculty members, faculty advisors, peer advisors, any member of the OMSP faculty and staff, any member of the RMC Dean's Office, any member of Rush University's Provost's Office, and RUMC's Senior Vice President of Human Resources / Equal Opportunity Coordinator; and
- RUMC's hotline (877-787-4009).

Through several of these mechanisms, particularly the online submission form, students and others have the ability to report complaints anonymously. While anonymous submissions are accepted, reporters are encouraged to identify themselves so that more thorough follow up and action planning can occur. Other individuals may report on behalf of a student, but SCORE will attempt to obtain the consent of the student before proceeding. Some events, however, may require action even if the student does not wish to pursue the complaint.

Procedure for Managing Reports

1. Reports of student mistreatment from all sources are monitored by and transmitted to the OMSP and collated by the OMSP support person.
2. OMSP support person communicates complaint to the SCORE Co-Chairs who determine whether the report must be addressed immediately or can be addressed at the next regular meeting.
3. SCORE investigates complaint of student mistreatment. OMSP notifies HR and Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) prior to the initiation of an investigation when there are complaints involving RMC or RUMC staff, faculty, employees or students that form a possible violation of law, including sexual harassment; unwanted physical contact; discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, and/or sexual orientation; retaliatory action against a complainant; similar serious misconduct with legal repercussions; or incidents where there is an established pattern of repeated but less serious misconduct.
4. Any investigation that results in a finding that confirms student mistreatment is reported to OMSP.
5. SCORE develops an action plan to address the complaint and finding.
6. Action plan carried out and results are recorded. Any action plan that recommends discipline of RMC faculty, staff, employees, or students is first conveyed to OMSP, which works with HR, OLA and, as appropriate, the Executive Committee of the Medical Staff to ensure uniform and appropriate discipline can be taken.
7. Information regarding the entire report is recorded in the SCORE database by the OMSP support person and is also tracked by OMSP (which collates RMC student mistreatment information from all sources).
8. A summary of the activities of SCORE is reported quarterly to the Dean.

Approved by SCORE, January 14, 2014

Approved by the Office of Legal Affairs, January 24, 2014

Approved by Faculty Council, February 4, 2014