

**Common Ground Framework
for Professional Conduct**
at Michigan State University's
College of Osteopathic
Medicine (MSUCOM)



#MSUCOM

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Common Ground Framework

An outline of core principles intended to unite all sectors of MSUCOM in the shared pursuit of professional conduct.

Correlation between the proposed framework and community input

This section examines how the core principles herein align to the climate survey feedback received by the college

Appendix A: Examples of Professional Behaviors

A detailed chart with sample illustrations of professional behaviors as outlined with this framework.

Appendix B: Alignment with Professional Standards

A sampling of this framework's alignment with External Professional Standards such as AACOM, AAMC, AAPA, IPE Collaboration, Graduate Mentoring, and others

Appendix C: Resources and Associated Professional Standards

A list of resources and standards used to develop and align this framework.

Introduction

The Common Ground Framework for Professional Conduct is intended as a set of guiding, foundational principles that underlie professional conduct regardless of whether you are staff, student, or faculty at MSUCOM.

On the pages that follow and in the supporting appendices, these guiding principles will be outlined.

This framework is not meant to be a checklist of rules, nor is it a plan for enforcing professional conduct. It is intended, instead, to help the MSUCOM community begin a period of renewal centered on collaborative energy, shared leadership, and healing of mind, body and spirit. We hope it will spark discussions and creativity for ways to live these principles at MSUCOM.

Michigan State University is a land grant institution with deep roots in agriculture. From those beginnings we have seen the benefits of companion growth, where plants with different strengths and needs are brought together to enrich the soil of their common ground and support each other's development. The unity of mind, body, and spirit that underlies the field of osteopathic medicine bears out this natural truth in our practice: that health is best supported by successful collaboration of the constitutive elements.

Although they may each mature in their own way with their own needs, the students, staff, and faculty of MSUCOM will grow best when they grow together.

Purpose of the Framework

This framework aligns with existing, widely-used, external standards for healthcare providers; yet, it also encompasses and applies to all professionals at work within the shared college community, independent of their specific roles or responsibilities. It is a set of guiding, foundational principles that underpin professional conduct and integrity.

As we adopt a model that is consistent and transparent for professional conduct at all levels of MSUCOM, we can foster a flourishing community where all can grow and learn together.

Adaptations and Uses

The Common Ground Framework has many flexible adaptations and uses, including but not limited to:

- 1) Formation of a balanced perspective as a platform to assess situations involving conflict or misunderstanding
- 2) Longitudinal reflection of one's own professional development and modeling of exemplary behavior within the MSUCOM community
- 3) A foundation for discussion between community members regarding professional behavior (Cup of Coffee model)
- 4) Building mutually beneficial professional interactions and conduct by a team, group, or individual
- 5) Identification and acknowledgment of exemplary behaviors by members of the MSUCOM community
- 6) Development of collaborative skills and shared leadership
- 7) Establishment and growth of strong interprofessional teams
- 8) Wide distribution of a pocket version of the Common Ground CORE principles - to include clinical sites and faculty

How is this operationalized?

Selection of the specific methods for operationalizing this framework should best be determined by individuals, teams, and groups from all sectors of the College working collaboratively for the common good of MSUCOM.

Interprofessional teams and departments are encouraged to use some of the above suggested strategies for operationalization in their area.

When teams are planning the implementation phase of this framework, Appendices A and B provide additional resources for consideration. Appendix A gives concrete examples of specific behavior levels. Appendix B illustrates some of the linkages to external standards; the text of these might provide ideas for next steps specific to certain situations.

Expectations of Professional Conduct for members of the MSUCOM community

Each member of the MSUCOM community is a necessary part of a very significant undertaking: the preparation and delivery of the highest quality of healthcare now and in the future. From our first moments on campus, administration, faculty, students, and staff begin working together in interprofessional teams to accomplish this purpose. Our professional conduct impacts the quality and substance of our working relationships and the quality and climate of our working environment. We are expected to interact with an open and welcoming attitude toward each other and to present ourselves in a manner that inspires trust and confidence.

Integrity requires community members to maintain professional standards even when we are not being monitored. We should be conscientious about our work, engaging as active participants in the process of teaching, learning, practicing health care and engaging with each other. Throughout our time here, we are expected to be thoughtful of how our actions reflect on ourselves and the institution.

One of the initiatives encouraged by the larger university is “advancing the common good with uncommon will.” As MSUCOM moves forward as a community of excellence within the larger university, the establishment of clear and transparent expectations for professional conduct is important. Specific expectations of professional conduct must be well defined and aligned to strategic external professional expectations for our community.

The practice of medicine is fundamentally an act of service, and that service should be borne out of a sincere and sympathetic concern for the physical and emotional well-being of those in need. Recognition of the dignity of other humans should be exemplified by all those involved in health care. The tenets of osteopathic medicine should help shape our plans and guide our actions. All MSUCOM community members should seek to learn about, and reflect on, life experiences different from their own.

Executive Summary of the Common Ground Framework

The acronym **CORE** (Collaboration, Opportunity, Responsibility, and Expertise) is a mindful way to organize the guiding framework for professional conduct at MSUCOM.

These common ground principles cross all professions and job descriptions.

C	Collaboration working together with others Interactive Dynamics Communication Skills Use of Feedback
O	Opportunity encouraging an environment of mutual support Shared Leadership Problem Solving Skills Decision Making
R	Responsibility supporting a shared culture of accountability Effective Use of Time and Resources Critical Thinking Skills Mindfulness and Self-Care
E	Expertise having relevant skills or knowledge Core of Knowledge Technical Skills Continuing Professional Development

This chart outlines attributes connected to each category – for more detailed behavioral examples, see Appendix A

Collaboration		Working together with others
C	Interactive Dynamics	Interact effectively and respectfully with people you encounter; demonstrate honesty, genuineness, humility, and compassion
	Communication Skills	Demonstrate respect, civility, and courtesy in communication; communicate effectively with diverse individuals and groups for a variety of purposes using available technologies; employ active listening
	Use of Feedback	Identify sources of feedback; deliver and receive effective feedback for initiatives, evaluations and assessments, quality improvements, conflict resolution, and peer review
Opportunity		Encouraging an environment of mutual support
O	Shared Leadership	Exhibit advocacy for self and others; accept situational leadership as needed; establish mutual support and respect: participate as a support for others regardless of title or position
	Problem Solving Skills	Recognize and define problems; analyze data; implement solutions; evaluate outcomes; include the perspectives of others
	Decision Making	Fulfill commitments; be accountable for actions and outcomes; discuss and contribute your perspective in group settings; listen to multiple viewpoints prior to making a decision
Responsibility		Supporting a shared culture of accountability
R	Effective Use of Time and Resources	Invest time, energy, and material resources efficiently in order to provide effective services; demonstrate integrity and stewardship of resources
	Critical Thinking Skills	Recognize and differentiate facts, illusions, and assumptions; Question logically; identify gaps in information and knowledge
	Mindfulness and Self Care	Actively engage in surrounding circumstances and activities; self-assess, self-correct, and self-direct; identify sources of stress and develop effective coping behaviors
Expertise		Having relevant skills or knowledge
E	Core of Knowledge	Develop core professional knowledge and apply it in clinical, academic, and administrative settings
	Technical Skills	Show competency and proficiency in performing tasks integral to the scope and practice of your profession
	Continuing Professional Development	Identify needs and resources for learning; continually seek new knowledge and understanding in your profession

Correlation between the Common Ground Framework and the “Creating COMmunity” process



These two projects occurred simultaneously and resulted in many correlations between the community input from the “Creating COMmunity” process and the intentions behind the Common Ground framework. As MSUCOM continues to move forward, these two projects will continue to guide the work of the college.

On the following pages, bullet points in the right-side column are adapted from the “Creating COMmunity” process summary and are directly correlated with the elements listed in the left-side column as they relate to the CORE principles outlined in the Common Ground framework.

Together these collaborative efforts begin to lay the foundation for a shared vision across the college with clarity and transparency.

Collaboration

Interactive Dynamics

Communication Skills

Use of Feedback



Working together with others

- Building community and collaborating between roles (staff, students, faculty); listen to and respect ideas and contributions; valuing the roles and contributions of all positions; valuing people and their contributions; people treated equitably in different titles or class levels; diversity and inclusion of thoughts and ideas; minorities to be present/active/engaged; diversity and inclusion of thoughts; genuineness without power dynamics; assume best intentions from one another; respecting and representing ideas of students; growing together and learning together
- More communication between sites; respecting differences and autonomy of sites with collaboration opportunities; interact across disciplines; understanding/respect/kindness; trust/honest/accountable; listen and take account of employees' opinions with more representation, specifically on committees with people from all units and parts of the college; safe space for people to speak up; being vulnerable and open within college
- Culture free from retaliation, able to speak without fear; safety to express self, speak, and make mistakes without fear of harassment; humility and freedom to say "I don't know"; feeling supported in advancements and without fear; transparency in what is happening; celebratory - being empathetic, genuine, healthy; adaptable to change and using the feedback of students

Opportunity

Shared Leadership

Problem Solving Skills

Decision Making



Encouraging an environment of mutual support

- Opportunities for growth and development between all three sites; transparency in job openings and new positions; recruitment and retention of diverse employees and students (especially Black students and faculty); transparency/accountability - “if you see something say something”; unity and support between faculty, staff, and students; opportunities for research, committees, curriculum changes; knowing how to give and receive help
- Support for conflict resolution; assistance when issues arise; collectively practicing core values with innovation and forward thinking; integrity - recognizing and acknowledging challenging moments in the college
- Representation from staff on committees and decision making; representation from all sites in making decisions; genuinely listen to all feedback and capture a diversity of thoughts

Responsibility

Effective Use of Time
and Resources

Critical Thinking Skills

Mindfulness and
Self-Care

R

Supporting a shared culture of accountability

- Take responsibility for our work and role; having resources available to foster a new thought/idea/innovation: time, financial, people, attention
- Upholding Osteopathic roots and reflecting the principles
- Caring as individuals: mind, body, spirit; an inspiring and positive culture where people want to come to work; honoring mind-spirit and acknowledge burnout and/or depression; culture of common courtesy and respect (ex. sending timely emails, calling and stating name/role on conference calls, etc.)

Expertise

Core of Knowledge

Technical Skills

Continuing Professional Development

E

Having relevant skills or knowledge

- Basis in Osteopathic roots; valuing practice as much as research; identifying shared values and common ground – patient and student centered; proactive and communicative of shared goals; academic excellence and professionalism from faculty, staff, students and administrators
- Faculty - career development opportunities; provide a foundation for professional/personal development and skill building; professional recruitment and retention; more forward thinking in facilities and lectures; engaging professors and lectures
- Access to one-on-one meetings with supervisors to give and receive constructive criticism; student centered-professional centered; academic support for students; opportunities to pursue hands-on learning outside of coursework

Next Steps

The Common Ground Framework for Professional Conduct is intended to be a living document. It should be revisited and updated as needed to reflect a living, growing community, and should dovetail with ongoing efforts to assess and improve the climate of the college.

The MSUCOM community must also work together to determine how this framework will be operationalized. And that process, too, will likely need to be a living process that evolves as we grow and learn together.

To view the supporting appendices, please visit:

https://com.msu.edu/download_file/1430/0