TULANE
School *of*
Medicine

Professionalism
Program

Annual Report

2025 - 2026

About

Tulane University School of Medicine (SOM) established the Professionalism Program to facilitate the creation and maintenance of a respectful and intellectually stimulating work and learning environment. The program's core values are outlined in the SOM's Guiding Principles, which are acknowledged annually by community members.

RESPECT ETHICAL INTEGRITY COMMUNICATION ACCOUNTABILITY DRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE

Administration



Mary Killackey, MD
Faculty Lead



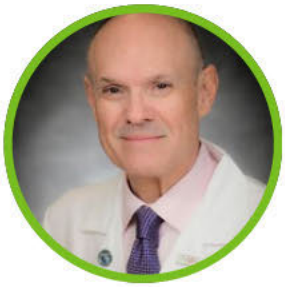
Bethany Branson Becnel, MS
Program Administrator

TRIO

The TRIO comprises five faculty members nominated and approved by the Professionalism Advisory Board and Executive Faculty. They review all submitted concerns and determine whether they should be processed according to established algorithms or require escalation.



Robert Hoover, MD
Clinical Science
Medicine - Nephrology & Hypertension



Fernando Sanchez, MD
Clinical Science
Orthopaedics



Laurianne Wild, MD
Clinical Science
Medicine - Allergy & Immunology



Sarah Lindsey, PhD
Basic Science
Pharmacology



Lisa Morici, PhD
Basic Science
Microbiology & Immunology

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board was established in February 2022, with the primary role of overseeing the program. Its bylaws were formalized in May 2022.

Scope/Function:

1. Provides oversight and monitors the functioning of the Professionalism Program to ensure accountability. This includes changes to bylaws, policies, updates, and approvals for new initiatives.
2. Will NOT have access to individual reports or details of interventions.
3. Meets quarterly to review aggregated data, reports, and quality assurance metrics (i.e., timeliness of responding, user satisfaction, etc.); may meet ad hoc if needed to resolve a time-sensitive operational issue.
4. Appoints the members of the TRIO based on nominations/approvals by Executive Faculty.
5. Approves/recommends invited educational speakers and the annual utilization of the Jerry Hickson Endowed Fund, which is intended to support the Program's mission in concordance with the fund resolution.

Membership:

Ex-officio/Voting

1. Faculty Lead/Director
2. Program Administrator
3. Designated Institutional Official
4. Chair of the GME Professional Identity and Learning Environment Subcommittee
5. President of Tulane Resident and Fellow Congress
6. Associate Dean for Student Affairs
7. President of Medical Student Honor Board
8. Biomedical Sciences Director of Graduate Education
9. BMS Student Representative
10. BMS Postdoc Representative
11. Assistant Dean for Academic Excellence and Community Engagement
12. Chief Clinical Officer for Academic Excellence and Community Engagement
13. Curriculum Advocate
14. Executive Director, Administration and Operations

Elected/Voting Faculty

1. Sonia Malhotra, MD, MS, FAAP (Internal Medicine, Hospice & Palliative Care)
2. Rizwan Aslam, DO, MSMEd, MBA, MPH, FACS (Otolaryngology)
3. Nakeisha L. Pierre, MD (Anesthesiology)
4. Chad Steele, PhD (Microbiology & Immunology)

Ex-officio/Non-voting

1. Dean of the School of Medicine
2. HR Representative
3. Dean of Faculty Affairs

Growth and Strategic Engagement

During the 2025–2026 academic year, the Professionalism Program intentionally stepped back to examine its processes, structure, outreach, and impact from a continuous quality improvement perspective. As the Program has grown and matured since its establishment in 2021, this year focused on strengthening infrastructure, expanding collaboration, improving visibility, and ensuring that the Program remains responsive to the evolving needs of the Tulane University School of Medicine community.

- A **comprehensive review of prior programming and calendars** was conducted to identify departments, learner groups, and stakeholders that should be included in a refreshed, more systematic scheduling process for Professionalism Program presentations. Based on feedback from the School of Medicine community, the Program also began updating its presentations to provide more audience-specific, practical, and engaging education on professionalism, the learning environment, reporting pathways, and available support.
- Several **leadership and governance updates** occurred during the year. On July 1, 2025, Dr. Hong Liu rotated off the Professionalism TRIO, and Dr. Sarah Lindsey, Dr. Barbara S. Beckman Professor of Pharmacology, joined the TRIO. Following Dr. Dennard's retirement, Dr. Rizwan Aslam, Chair of the Department of Otolaryngology and Associate Professor of Head and Neck Oncology, Microvascular Surgery, Neurosurgery, and Plastic Surgery, was approved to fill the open Professionalism Program Advisory Board seat for a term spanning July 2025 through June 2028. In addition, Assistant Dean for Administration Sue Pollack retired and was succeeded by Dana Keren, Executive Director of Administration and Operations for the School of Medicine. An Advisory Board vacancy also remains following the departure of the Assistant Dean for Academic Excellence and Community Engagement.
- In response to recommendations from a recent gap analysis, the Professionalism Program enhanced the **visibility and recognition of its Faculty Peer Messengers** by adding a dedicated listing to the Program website. The Program also expanded opportunities for recognition by supporting **multiple avenues for kudos submissions**, including the School of Medicine Professionalism Program process and the University-wide recognition system supported through Talent Development.
- The Program **strengthened communication and data-sharing** processes by adding Executive Directors to the distribution of quarterly aggregated Chair reports. This change is intended to help departmental and administrative leaders more effectively identify, understand, and address emerging professionalism or learning environment concerns within their respective areas.
- **Strategic relationship-building** was also a key focus throughout the year. Program leadership met with key stakeholders at LSU Health Sciences Center to share information about Tulane's Professionalism Program and explore opportunities for collaboration with LSUHSC and LCMC in addressing learning environment concerns. The Program also met with the Dean of the Tulane School of Nursing to welcome Nursing leadership into the School of Medicine community, introduce the Professionalism Program, and establish an early connection for support and collaboration.
- To further **strengthen the Peer Messenger model and overall programmatic capacity**, the Faculty Lead and Program Administrator met with leaders from the Tulane University Leadership Institute to explore potential partnership opportunities for the 2026–2027 academic year. Discussion included coaching, leadership development, workshops, and other resources that could support Faculty Peer Messengers in navigating feedback conversations, accountability, relational trust, and professional growth. Program leadership also met with the Resolution and Restorative Engagement Program to explore future collaboration related to communication, difficult conversations, accountability, and restorative approaches tailored to the School of Medicine community.
- The Faculty Lead and Program Administrator also joined the **Learning Environment Professionals Consortium** and attended the inaugural 2026 Learning Environment Professionals Virtual Conference, Cultivating Healthy Learning Spaces: Innovation, Inclusion, and Integrity in Medical & Health Professions Education. Participation in this national community provided valuable opportunities to learn from peer institutions, remain informed about emerging practices in learning environment work, and bring new ideas back to Tulane.
- The Program conducted its **first formal continuous quality improvement feedback conversations** with biomedical sciences students, medical students, and residents/fellows. These conversations created a meaningful opportunity to hear directly from trainees about their awareness of the Program, experiences within the learning environment, barriers to reporting, and ideas for improving communication, education, and support. Feedback gathered through these sessions will continue to guide ongoing refinements to the Professionalism Program and its efforts to create a respectful, supportive, and psychologically safe learning and working environment.

Undergraduate Medical Education

In addition to the tenets outlined in the SOM's Guiding Principles and the Professionalism Program, the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), the SOM's accrediting body, outlines requirements and expectations regarding the learning environment, professionalism, and student mistreatment. See below for the associated accreditation elements and student satisfaction data on internal surveys, as well as the AAMC Graduation Questionnaire (GQ) and the AAMC Medical School Year Two Questionnaire (Y2Q).

Element 3.5: Learning Environment/Professionalism:

A medical school ensures that the learning environment of its medical education program is conducive to the ongoing development of explicit and appropriate professional behaviors in its medical students, faculty, and staff at all locations. The medical school and its clinical affiliates share the responsibility for periodically evaluating the learning environment to identify both positive and negative influences on maintaining professional standards. This evaluation aims to develop and implement effective strategies to promote positive influences and mitigate negative ones, as well as to identify and promptly address any violations of professional standards.

2025 Y2Q - Learning Environment/Professionalism of Faculty/Personal and Professional Development [Percentage Sum of Agree and Strongly Agree]	**National Average**	**Tulane**
My medical school prepares students to effectively communicate with people across a broad spectrum of backgrounds	[redacted]	[redacted]
I often feel isolated at school	[redacted]	[redacted]
My teachers and mentors have told me that they have high standards for my performance	[redacted]	[redacted]
I often feel that my performance is being judged more closely than others	[redacted]	[redacted]
My teachers and mentors have told me that they feel sure that I can perform well against high standards	[redacted]	[redacted]
I closely share the professional values and interests of most of my classmates	[redacted]	[redacted]
I often feel as if my performance is being judged as a member of the identity group that I belong to more than as an individual	[redacted]	[redacted]
Students learn effective tools for recognizing their own bias in interacting with people of different identity groups	[redacted]	[redacted]
The medical school experience, to this point, contributes to students' ability to work in disadvantaged communities	[redacted]	[redacted]
My medical school has done a good job of fostering and nurturing my development as a person	[redacted]	[redacted]
My medical school has done a good job of fostering and nurturing my development as a future physician	[redacted]	[redacted]

Y2Q - Learning Environment/Professionalism of Faculty/Personal and Professional Development [Percentage Sum of Fairly Often, Very Often, Always]	**National Avg**	**Tulane**
There are disconnects between what I am taught about professional behaviors/attitudes and what I see being demonstrated by *faculty*.	[redacted]	[redacted]
Respecting patient confidentiality	[redacted]	[redacted]
Using professional language/avoiding derogatory language	[redacted]	[redacted]
Dressing in a professional manner	[redacted]	[redacted]
Resolving conflicts in ways that respect the dignity of all involved	[redacted]	[redacted]
Being respectful of house staff and other physicians	[redacted]	[redacted]
Respecting diversity	[redacted]	[redacted]
Being respectful of other health professions	[redacted]	[redacted]
Being respectful of other specialties	[redacted]	[redacted]
Being on time and managing a schedule well	[redacted]	[redacted]
Providing direction and constructive feedback	[redacted]	[redacted]
Showing respectful interaction with students	[redacted]	[redacted]
Showing empathy and compassion	[redacted]	[redacted]

GQ - Professionalism/Learning Environment **How often are the following Professional behaviors demonstrated by your medical school faculty?** [Percentage Sum of Fairly Often, Very Often, Always]	**National Avg**	**Tulane**
There are disconnects between what I am taught about professional behaviors/attitudes and what I see being demonstrated by *faculty*.	[redacted]	[redacted]
There are disconnects between what I am taught about professional behaviors/attitudes and what I see being demonstrated by *residents*.	[redacted]	[redacted]
Respecting patient confidentiality	[redacted]	[redacted]
Using professional language/avoiding derogatory language	[redacted]	[redacted]
Being respectful of house staff and other physicians	[redacted]	[redacted]
Respecting diversity	[redacted]	[redacted]
Being respectful of other health professions	[redacted]	[redacted]
Being respectful of other specialties	[redacted]	[redacted]
Providing direction and constructive feedback	[redacted]	[redacted]
Showing respectful interaction with students	[redacted]	[redacted]
Showing empathy and compassion	[redacted]	[redacted]
Being respectful of patients' dignity and autonomy	[redacted]	[redacted]
Actively listened and showed interest in patients	[redacted]	[redacted]
Taking time and effort to explain information to patients	[redacted]	[redacted]
Advocating appropriately on behalf of patients	[redacted]	[redacted]
Resolving conflicts in ways that respect the dignity of all involved	[redacted]	[redacted]

In accordance with Element 3.5, the Tulane SOM engages in periodic evaluations of the learning environment to identify both positive and negative influences on the maintenance of professional standards. See below for **themes** derived from medical student feedback about the learning environment in both the preclinical and clinical phases. Findings are shared with curriculum subcommittees, as well as the full curriculum committee for review and implementation of action items.

Preclinical Phase:

- **Positive Influences on the Learning Environment**
  - [redacted]
- **Negative Influences on the Learning Environment**
  - [redacted]

Clinical Phase:

- **Positive Influences on the Learning Environment**
  - [redacted]
- **Negative Influences on the Learning Environment**
  - [redacted]

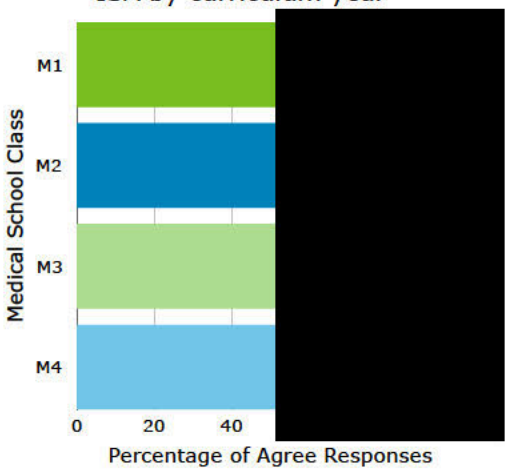
Element 3.6: Student Mistreatment:

A medical school develops effective written policies that define mistreatment, has effective mechanisms in place for a prompt response to any complaints, and supports educational activities aimed at preventing mistreatment. Mechanisms for reporting mistreatment are understood by medical students, including visiting medical students, and ensure that any violations can be registered and investigated without fear of retaliation.

For the 2025-2026 academic year, medical students were asked to provide feedback on the mistreatment policy, reporting procedures, and the medical school's activities to prevent mistreatment. See below for rates of agreement by medical school class.

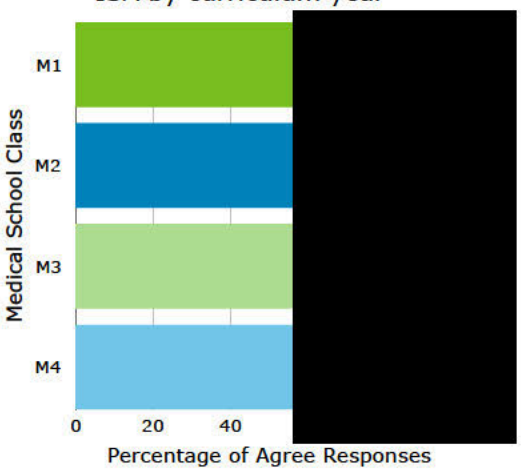
The medical school's student mistreatment policy is clear

ISA by curriculum year



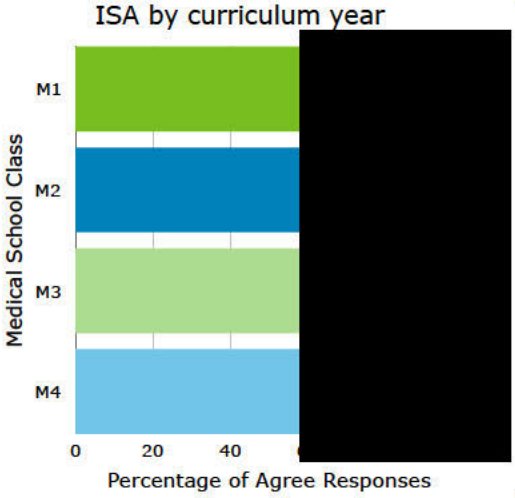
I know the procedures for reporting student mistreatment or know where to find them

ISA by curriculum year



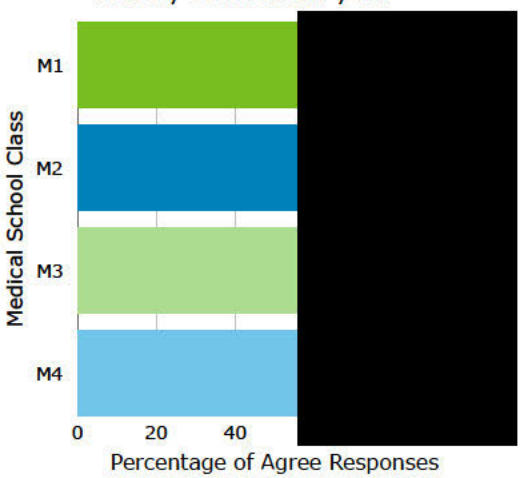
I am aware of the medical school's activities to prevent student mistreatment

ISA by curriculum year



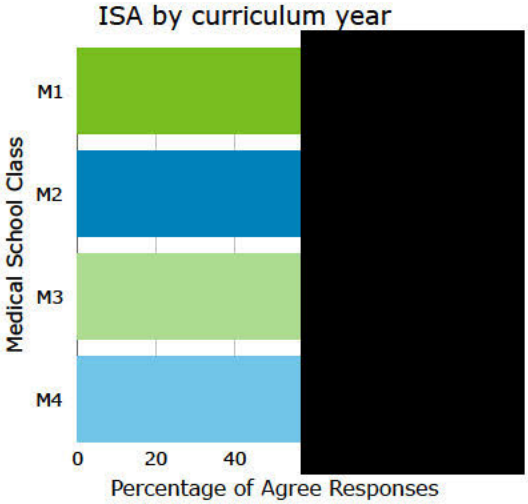
The medical school's investigates reports of student mistreatment

ISA by curriculum year



The medical school's activities to prevent student mistreatment are effective

ISA by curriculum year



2025-2026 T1 Preclinical End-of-Year Survey **"During medical school, how frequently have you..."** [Percentage (Sum of Occasionally & Frequently) experienced during medical school]	**Tulane**
Been publicly embarrassed?	[redacted]
Been publicly humiliated?	[redacted]
Been threatened with physical harm?	[redacted]
Been physically harmed?	[redacted]
Been required to perform personal services?	[redacted]
Been subjected to unwanted sexual advances?	[redacted]
Been asked to exchange sexual favors for grades or other rewards?	[redacted]
Been denied opportunities for training or rewards based on gender?	[redacted]
Been subjected to offensive sexist remarks/names?	[redacted]
Received lower evaluations or grades solely because of gender rather than performance?	[redacted]
Been denied opportunities for training or rewards based on race or ethnicity?	[redacted]
Been subjected to racially or ethnically offensive remarks/names?	[redacted]
Received lower evaluations or grades solely because of race or ethnicity rather than performance?	[redacted]
Been denied opportunities for training or rewards based on sexual orientation?	[redacted]
Been subjected to offensive remarks/names related to sexual orientation?	[redacted]
Received lower evaluations or grades solely because of sexual orientation rather than performance?	[redacted]
Been denied opportunities for training or rewards based on a disability?	[redacted]
Been subjected to offensive remarks/names related to a disability?	[redacted]
Received lower evaluations or grades solely because of a disability rather than performance?	[redacted]

Y2Q - 2025 Medical School Year Two Questionnaire **"During medical school, how frequently have you..."** [Percentage (Sum of Occasionally & Frequently) experienced during medical school]	**National Avg**	**Tulane**
Been publicly embarrassed?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Been publicly humiliated?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Been threatened with physical harm?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Been physically harmed?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Been required to perform personal services?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Been subjected to unwanted sexual advances?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Been asked to exchange sexual favors for grades or other rewards?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Been denied opportunities for training or rewards based on gender?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Been subjected to offensive sexist remarks/names?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Received lower evaluations or grades solely because of gender rather than performance?	[redacted]	[redacted]

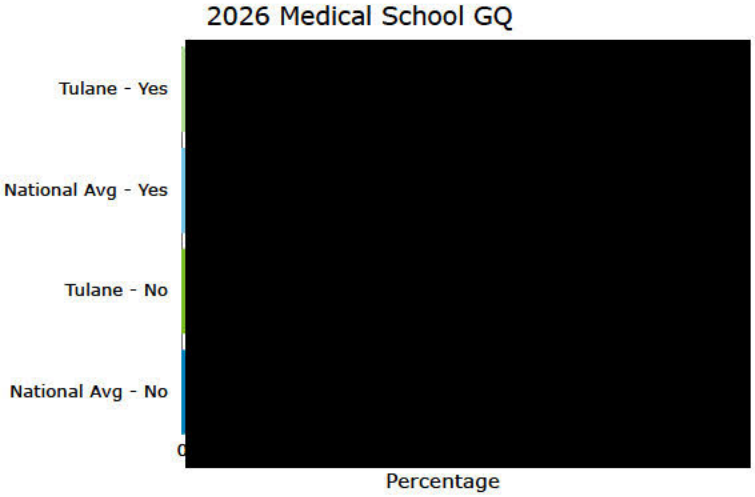
Been denied opportunities for training or rewards based on race or ethnicity?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Been subjected to racially or ethnically offensive remarks/names?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Received lower evaluations or grades solely because of race or ethnicity rather than performance?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Been denied opportunities for training or rewards based on sexual orientation?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Been subjected to offensive remarks/names related to sexual orientation?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Received lower evaluations or grades solely because of sexual orientation rather than performance?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Been denied opportunities for training or rewards based on a disability?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Been subjected to offensive remarks/names related to a disability?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Received lower evaluations or grades solely because of a disability rather than performance?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Been subjected to offensive remarks/names related to a disability?	[redacted]	[redacted]

2025-2026 T3 Clinical End-of-Year Survey **"During medical school, how frequently have you..."** [Percentage (Sum of Occasionally & Frequently) experienced during medical school]	**Tulane**
Been publicly embarrassed?	[redacted]
Been publicly humiliated?	[redacted]
Been threatened with physical harm?	[redacted]
Been physically harmed?	[redacted]
Been required to perform personal services?	[redacted]
Been subjected to unwanted sexual advances?	[redacted]
Been asked to exchange sexual favors for grades or other rewards?	[redacted]
Been denied opportunities for training or rewards based on gender?	[redacted]
Been subjected to offensive sexist remarks/names?	[redacted]
Received lower evaluations or grades solely because of gender rather than performance?	[redacted]
Been denied opportunities for training or rewards based on race or ethnicity?	[redacted]
Been subjected to racially or ethnically offensive remarks/names?	[redacted]
Received lower evaluations or grades solely because of race or ethnicity rather than performance?	[redacted]
Been denied opportunities for training or rewards based on sexual orientation?	[redacted]
Been subjected to offensive remarks/names related to sexual orientation?	[redacted]
Received lower evaluations or grades solely because of sexual orientation rather than performance?	[redacted]
Been denied opportunities for training or rewards based on a disability?	[redacted]
Been subjected to offensive remarks/names related to a disability?	[redacted]
Received lower evaluations or grades solely because of a disability rather than performance?	[redacted]
Been denied opportunities for training or rewards based on religion?	[redacted]

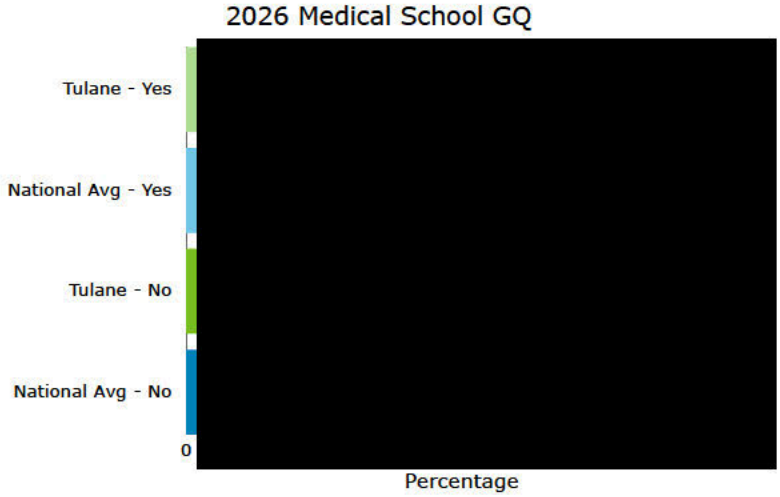
Been subjected to offensive remarks/names related to religion?	[redacted]
Received lower evaluations or grades solely based on religion rather than performance?	[redacted]
Been subjected to negative or offensive behavior(s) on personal beliefs or personal characteristics other than gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or religion?	[redacted]

GQ Mistreatment Behavior [Percentage (Sum of Occasionally & Frequently) experienced during medical school]	**National Avg**	**Tulane**
Publicly embarrassed	[redacted]	[redacted]
Publicly humiliated	[redacted]	[redacted]
Threatened with physical harm	[redacted]	[redacted]
Physically harmed	[redacted]	[redacted]
Required to perform personal services	[redacted]	[redacted]
Subjected to unwanted sexual advances	[redacted]	[redacted]
Asked to exchange sexual favors for grades or other rewards	[redacted]	[redacted]
Denied opportunities for training or rewards based on gender	[redacted]	[redacted]
Been subjected to offensive sexist remarks/names	[redacted]	[redacted]
Received lower evaluations or grades solely because of gender rather than performance.	[redacted]	[redacted]
Denied opportunities for training or rewards based on race or ethnicity	[redacted]	[redacted]
Subjected to racially or ethnically offensive remarks/names	[redacted]	[redacted]
Received lower evaluations or grades solely because of race or ethnicity rather than performance.	[redacted]	[redacted]
Denied opportunities for training or rewards based on sexual orientation	[redacted]	[redacted]
Subjected to offensive remarks/names related to sexual orientation	[redacted]	[redacted]
Received lower evaluations or grades solely because of sexual orientation rather than performance.	[redacted]	[redacted]
Been denied opportunities for training or rewards based on a disability?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Been subjected to offensive remarks/names related to a disability?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Received lower evaluations or grades solely because of a disability rather than performance?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Been denied opportunities for training or rewards based on religion?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Been subjected to offensive remarks/names based related to religion?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Received lower evaluations or grades solely because of religion rather than performance?	[redacted]	[redacted]
Subjected to negative or offensive behavior(s) based on personal beliefs or characteristics other than gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or religion?	[redacted]	[redacted]

Are you aware that your school has policies regarding the mistreatment of medical students?



Do you know the procedures at your school for reporting the mistreatment of medical students?



Graduate Medical Education

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), the SOM's accrediting body for resident and fellow education, outlines requirements and expectations regarding the learning environment, professionalism, and student mistreatment. See below for the associated accreditation element.

ACGME VI: The Learning and Work Environment

The ACGME states: The Sponsoring Institution and each of its ACGME-accredited programs must provide a learning and working environment in which residents/fellows and faculty members have the opportunity to raise concerns and provide feedback without intimidation or retaliation, and in a confidential manner as appropriate. The Sponsoring Institution must ensure that its ACGME-accredited programs provide a professional, fair, respectful, and civil environment that is free from unprofessional behavior, including discrimination, sexual, and other forms of harassment, mistreatment, abuse, and/or coercion of residents/fellows, other learners, faculty members, and staff members. Moreover, the Sponsoring Institution, in partnership with its ACGME-accredited programs must have a process for education of residents/fellows and faculty members regarding unprofessional behavior, and a confidential process for reporting, investigating, monitoring, and addressing such concerns in a timely manner. See below for graduate medical education satisfaction data on the ACGME Resident/Fellow and Faculty Surveys.

2025-2026 ACGME Resident/Fellow Survey Professionalism	National Compliant %	Tulane Compliant %
Resident/fellows encouraged to feel comfortable calling supervisors with questions		
Faculty members do not act unprofessionally when teaching		
Faculty members do not act unprofessionally when providing care		
Process in place for confidential reporting of unprofessional behavior		
Able to raise concerns without fear of intimidation or retaliation		
Satisfied with process for dealing confidentially with problems and concerns		

2025-2026 ACGME Resident/Fellow Survey Professionalism	National Compliant %	Tulane Compliant %
Did not personally experience abuse, harassment, mistreatment, discrimination, or coercion	[redacted]	[redacted]
Did not witness abuse, harassment, mistreatment, discrimination, or coercion	[redacted]	[redacted]

2025-2026 ACGME Faculty Survey Professionalism	National Compliant %	Tulane Compliant %
Faculty members do not act unprofessionally	[redacted]	[redacted]
Residents/fellows comfortable calling supervisors with questions	[redacted]	[redacted]
Process for confidential reporting of unprofessional behavior	[redacted]	[redacted]
Satisfied with process to deal confidentially with problems and concerns	[redacted]	[redacted]
Did not personally experience abuse, harassment, mistreatment, discrimination, or coercion	[redacted]	[redacted]
Did not witness abuse, harassment, mistreatment, discrimination, or coercion	[redacted]	[redacted]

Medical Ethics and Professionalism in the Curriculum

In the rapidly evolving field of medicine, the knowledge of clinical skills and scientific facts is only part of what makes a competent healthcare professional. Equally important are the ethical frameworks and professional standards that guide decision-making in real-world situations. Incorporating bioethics and professionalism into curricula is essential to producing well-rounded physicians who can navigate moral dilemmas, maintain trust with patients, and uphold the highest standards of care.

See below for sessions that incorporate core concepts of medical ethics and professionalism in the medical student curriculum.

Core MD Curriculum	
Course	**Session**
Foundations in Medicine I	Introduction to Teamwork and Feedback
Foundations in Medicine I	Professionalism in Medicine
Foundations in Medicine I	Principles of Medical and Professional Ethics
Foundations in Medicine I	Ethics of Research and Consent
Foundations in Medicine I	Ethical Issues in Genetics
Foundations in Medicine I	CITI Training
Foundations in Medicine I	HIPAA & Bloodborne Pathogens
Endocrine/Reproductive Module I	Ethical Dilemmas in Genetic Diseases
Foundations in Medicine II	Ethical Issues Near the End of Life
Foundations in Medicine II	Ethical Issues in Obstetrics and Pediatrics
Foundations in Medicine II	Medico-Legal Issues in Ethics
Foundations in Medicine II	Ethics: Resource Allocation
Family Medicine	Cases in Informed Consent

Elective Opportunities	
Course	**Session**
MED 4015	Palliative Medicine
MED 5507	Palliative & End of Life Care
FAMY 4024	Healthcare Law for Physicians
FAMY 5001	Autonomy in the Physician/Patient Relationship

During the 2025-2026 academic year, residents were required to complete the following AMA modules that relate to professionalism.

LEVEL PGY-I	Core Competency
Basics of Health Equity for GME	Systems-Based Practice; Professionalism; Practice-Based Learning and Improvement; Patient Care; Interpersonal Communication Skills
Residents as Teachers	Interpersonal and Communication Skills; Practice-Based Learning and Improvement
Basics of Patient Safety	Interpersonal and Communication skills; Patient Care; Systems-Based Practice; Professionalism
Working Effectively Within an Interpersonal Team	Interpersonal and Communication Skills; Systems-Based Practice

LEVEL PGY-II	Core Competency
Patient Handoffs	Interpersonal Communication Skills; Systems-Based Practice
Basics of Quality Improvement	Practice-Based Learning and Improvement; Professionalism
Creating an Effective and Respectful Learning Environment	Interpersonal and Communication Skills; Practice-Based Learning and Improvement; Professionalism

LEVEL PGY-III	Core Competency
Social Determinants of Health	Systems-Based Practice; Professionalism; Practice-Based Learning and Improvement; Interpersonal and Communication Skills
Basics of Patient Safety	Interpersonal and Communication Skills; Patient Care; Systems-Based Practice; Professionalism
Working Effectively in Interpersonal Teams	Interpersonal and Communication Skills; Systems-Based Practice; Patient Care
Creating an Effective and Respectful Learning Environment	Interpersonal and Communication Skills; Systems-Based Practice

LEVEL PGY-IV	Core Competency
Privacy and Confidentiality	Systems-Based Practice; Professionalism
Conflicts of Interest	Interpersonal and Communication Skills; Professionalism; Systems-Based Practice
Creating an Effective and Respectful Learning Environment	Interpersonal and Communication Skills; Systems-Based Practice
Systems Thinking	Interpersonal and Communication Skills; Systems-Based Practice; Practice-Based Learning and Improvement

LEVEL PGY-V	Core Competency
Basics of Health Equity for GME	Systems-Based Practice; Professionalism; Practice-Based Learning and Improvement; Patient Care; Interpersonal Communication Skills
Working Effectively on Interprofessional Teams	Interpersonal and Communication Skills; Systems-Based Practice; Patient Care
Physician Health: Physicians Caring for Ourselves	Interpersonal and Communication Skills; Professionalism

LEVEL PGY-VI	Core Competency
Accepting Gifts From Industry	Systems-Based Practice; Professionalism
Fraud and Abuse	Systems-Based Practice; Professionalism

LEVEL PGY-VII	Core Competency
Social Determinants of Health	Systems-Based Practice; Professionalism
Physician Health: Physicians Caring for Ourselves	Interpersonal and Communication Skills; Patient Care; Systems-Based Practice; Professionalism
Health Care Quality: Measuring Physician Performance	Interpersonal and Communication Skills; Systems-Based Practice; Patient Care

LEVEL PGY-VIII	Core Competency
Fraud and Abuse	Systems-Based Practice; Professionalism
Conflicts of Interest	Interpersonal and Communication Skills; Professionalism; Systems-Based Practice

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Efforts

Learner Leadership CQI Listening Sessions

In January 2026, the Professionalism Program Administrator and members of the TRIO conducted structured continuous quality improvement (CQI) listening sessions with the Biomedical Science student leadership, the medical student leadership, and the resident/fellow leadership. These sessions were designed to supplement formal reporting and survey data by gathering qualitative, systems-level feedback regarding the learning environment, psychological safety, barriers to reporting, and learner perceptions of the Professionalism Program. Individual cases were not reviewed; feedback was summarized in aggregate to identify themes and opportunities for improvement.

Across all learner groups, participants emphasized the importance of continued visibility and education about the Professionalism Program, including how to access reporting pathways, what happens after a concern is submitted, how de-identification and pattern tracking are conducted, and what protections are available to learners. Participants also identified power dynamics, including relationships with faculty, mentors, supervisors, and evaluators, as potential barriers to reporting. Learners expressed a desire for clearer examples of reportable concerns, transparent communication regarding available reporting options, and reassurance that concerns can be raised without fear of retaliation.

Feedback also identified learner-specific opportunities. Biomedical Science student leadership highlighted the need for BMS-specific messaging and examples related to laboratory and PI/mentor relationships. Medical student leadership emphasized transparency regarding the reporting process, delayed-reporting options, and variability in clerkship-level awareness and engagement. Resident/fellow leadership identified a need for clearer reporting guidance across clinical sites and affiliated institutions, as well as additional education regarding pattern tracking, escalation, and available protections.

In response, the Professionalism Program is developing recurring learner-leadership touchpoints, strengthening orientation and annual educational messaging, and creating clearer learner-facing guidance regarding reporting pathways, process transparency, delayed reporting, and anti-retaliation protections. Aggregate feedback will also inform targeted outreach as appropriate. These listening sessions establish an ongoing feedback loop that supports proactive identification of learning-environment concerns and continuous improvement of the Professionalism Program.

External Consultant - Student Mistreatment

In response to selected student mistreatment indicators, Tulane University School of Medicine sought external guidance from Michael Kavan, PhD, Professor of Family Medicine at Creighton University School of Medicine, to review available data and identify opportunities for improvement.

Materials reviewed included AAMC and internal mistreatment data, current professionalism and ethics curricula, peer-institution comparisons, LCME standards, and existing reporting and response processes. The consultation affirmed Tulane's strong professionalism foundation while recommending continued attention to transparency, trend analysis, learner communication, and centralized processes for identifying and addressing concerns across UME, GME, and other health professions programs.

Recommendations from this review will help guide ongoing efforts to strengthen prevention, early intervention, accountability, and a respectful, psychologically safe learning environment for all learners.

Professionalism Training and Education Efforts

Professionalism Program Event	Date
New Resident/Fellow Orientation	June 16th & 25th, 2026
Medical Student T1 Orientation	August 1st, 2025
Biomedical Student Orientation	September 30th, 2025
GME Residency Program Directors & Associate Program Directors	March 18th, 2026
Medical Student T3 Transition to Clerkship Orientation	May 6th, 2026
School of Medicine Wide Grand Rounds *Pursuing Professionalism: Everyone Has a Role*	May 12th, 2026
Faculty Peer Messenger Presentation & Reception *Pursuing Professionalism: Everyone Has a Role... And Some Roles Are Real Special... Thanks to Messengers Everywhere!*	May 12th, 2026
School of Medicine Wide Staff Professionalism Program Town Hall	May 19th, 2026

Event	Event Sponsor	Date
Building a Culture of Professionalism *Learn essential professionalism skills: fostering respect, handling inappropriate behavior, and bystander intervention. Get practical strategies for better workplace communication.*	Tulane Talent Development	August 28th, 2025 September 17th, 2025 October 15th, 2025 November 19th, 2025 February 25th, 2026 April 22nd, 2026 May 27th, 2026
Demystifying Equal Opportunity & the Bias Reporting System *Learn more about the Office of Equal Opportunity & Resolution Management, the laws that govern complaints filed, protected statuses, the complaint process, and services offered.*	Office of Equal Opportunity & Resolution Management	September 9th, 2025 October 14th, 2025 November 11th, 2025 January 13th, 2026 February 10th, 2026
Title IX Training for Clerkship Leaders	Office of Equal Opportunity & Resolution Management	February 6th, 2026

Guest Speaker - Dr. Gerald Hickson

On May 11–12, 2026, Dr. Gerald Hickson returned to the Tulane University School of Medicine for two days of engagement with key School of Medicine stakeholders, including a School-wide Town Hall and a dedicated session and reception for Professionalism Program Peer Messengers. Dr. Hickson, Joseph C. Ross Chair in Medical Education and Administration, Professor of Pediatrics, and Founding Director of Vanderbilt Health's Center for Patient and Professional Advocacy (CPPA), presented *Pursuing Professionalism: Everyone Has a Role.*



Gerald B. Hickson, MD
Joseph C. Ross Chair of Medical Education and Administration, Professor of Pediatrics, Founding Director, Vanderbilt Health CPPA

Through case-based discussion, national data, and practical examples, Dr. Hickson emphasized that a culture of safety, respect, and high reliability requires both intentionally designed systems and accountable professionals. His presentation explored the impact that disrespectful behaviors can have on psychological safety, communication, teamwork, learning, patient outcomes,

employee retention, and organizational risk. He reinforced that professionalism is not solely an individual responsibility; it requires visible leadership commitment, clear shared values, reliable reporting and review processes, training, data, and a tiered approach to intervention.

Dr. Hickson also highlighted the essential role of Peer Messengers in delivering timely, collegial feedback through informal "cup of coffee" conversations. He emphasized that most professionals respond positively when concerns are addressed early, respectfully, confidentially, and with a focus on awareness rather than blame. His return visit provided an important opportunity for Tulane's leaders, faculty, staff, learners, and Peer Messengers to reflect on how each member of the School of Medicine community can help foster a respectful, accountable, and psychologically safe learning and working environment.

Peer Messengers

The Tulane Professionalism Program utilizes a peer messenger system as a non-punitive approach to addressing concerns about faculty professionalism that are reported. This system promotes self-regulation and self-correction by having peers address concerns rather than supervisors.

This year, the Professionalism Program sent two faculty members from the School of Medicine community, as well as the Program Administrator. All three traveled to Nashville to attend the *Promoting Professionalism* conference put on by The Vanderbilt Health Center for Patient and Professional Advocacy (CPPA).

During the 2025-2026 academic year, the Professionalism Program trained 3 new peer messengers.



Bethany Branson Becnel, MS
Program Administrator
Dean's Office



Craig Conard, MD
Pediatrics
Hospitalist
MFCH Professionalism Committee



Bonnie Chow, MD
Surgery
Abdominal Transplant

Tulane School of Medicine has a team of 59 active peer messengers who have completed training. These individuals represent a diverse range of expertise and experience within TUSOM and are well-prepared to serve as ambassadors of professionalism at the SOM. During the 2025-2026 academic year, 21 peer messenger cups of coffee were delivered to faculty members. The tables below detail the composition of the peer messenger group by rank and department. You can find the full list of our faculty peer messengers on the Professionalism Program website!

Rank	Count
Instructor	1
Assistant Professor	14
Associate Professor	20
Professor	16
Chair	8

Department	Count
Basic Science	13
Clinical Science	46

Emerging Leaders Program

During the 2025–2026 academic year, Professionalism Program Administrator Bethany Branson completed Tulane's Emerging Leaders Program (ELP), a nine-month cohort-based professional development experience focused on self-awareness, communication, emotional intelligence, relationship-building, and organizational leadership.

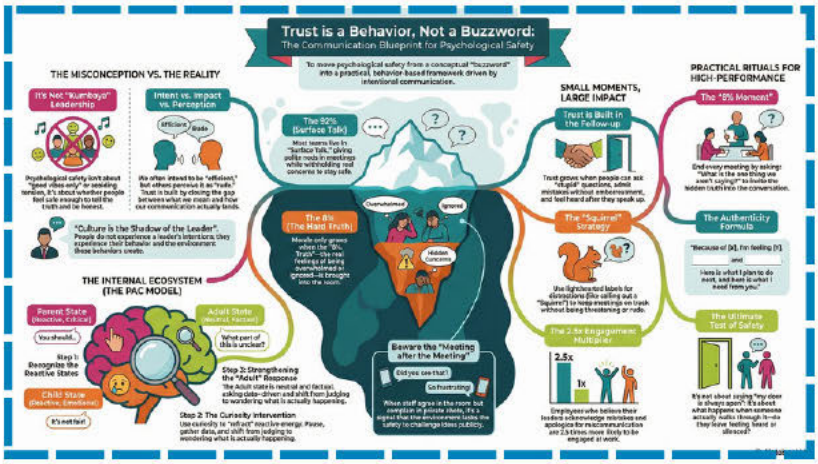




Throughout the program, the cohort explored individual communication and behavioral preferences; active listening and empathy; differences in perspective, hierarchy, and generational communication styles; assertive and thoughtful communication; and leading through change with intention and accountability. Participants were encouraged to consider how communication is received—not solely how it is intended—and to recognize the role of intent, impact, perception, psychological safety, and repair in effective professional relationships.

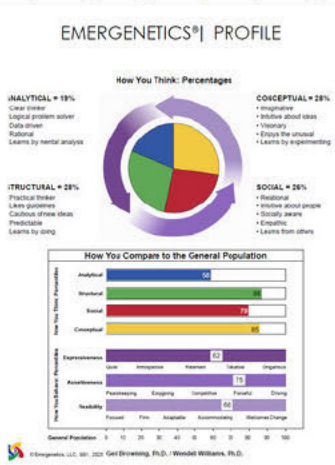
The cohort experience also emphasized predictable follow-through, trust-building, accountability, curiosity, and closing communication loops. These competencies are particularly relevant to the Professionalism Program's work in supporting individuals through sensitive or challenging situations, facilitating Peer Messenger conversations, responding to concerns, and fostering constructive resolution.

The leadership principles reinforced through ELP will continue to support the Professionalism Program's growth in areas including peer intervention, learning environment improvement, staff and trainee engagement, psychological safety, and cross-functional collaboration across the School of Medicine.











Reporting Data

The Professionalism Program supports an online system for submitting concerns, which are recorded in a confidential database. Concerns are reviewed and managed by the TRIO following established algorithms, with a focus on early intervention to prevent recurrent unprofessional behavior. The program also recognizes those who exemplify the ideals of professionalism via a 'kudos' submission form.

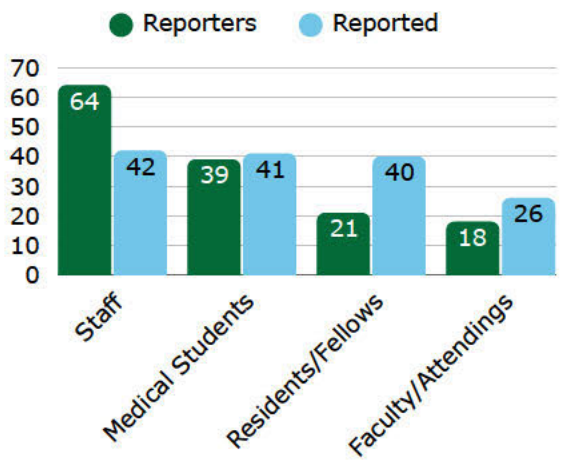
Concerns

During the 2025–2026 academic year, the most frequently reported concern themes were professional and ethical principles, interpersonal respect and communication, and disruptive or inappropriate behavior. Categories were grouped for reporting clarity while preserving the original intake taxonomy.

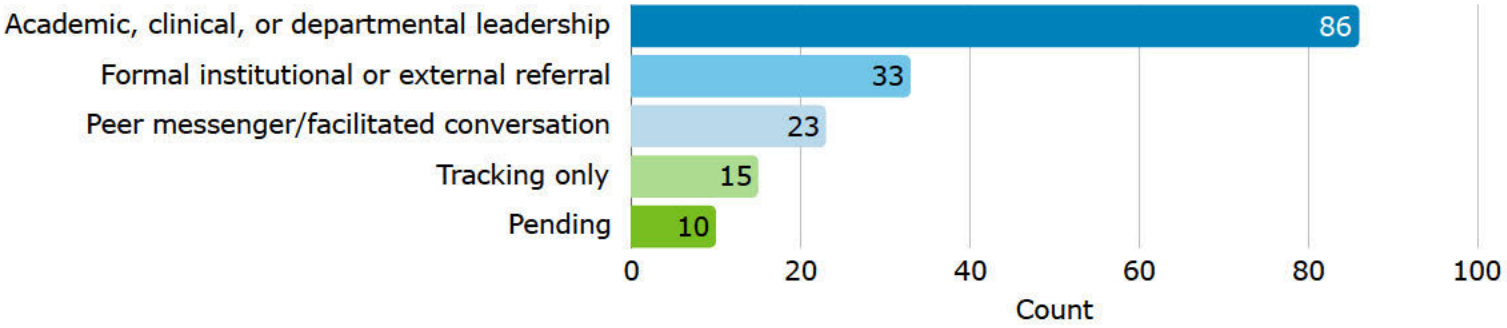
Most concerns were routed to the appropriate academic, departmental, clinical, or institutional response pathway. Peer Messenger engagement remained an important early-intervention and relational response option.

Concerns were submitted by and involved members across the School of Medicine community. Role-level counts reflect concerns received and should not be interpreted as rates of behavior, substantiated findings, or comparisons of risk across groups.

Who Used the Program



Primary Response Pathways



167
Concerns

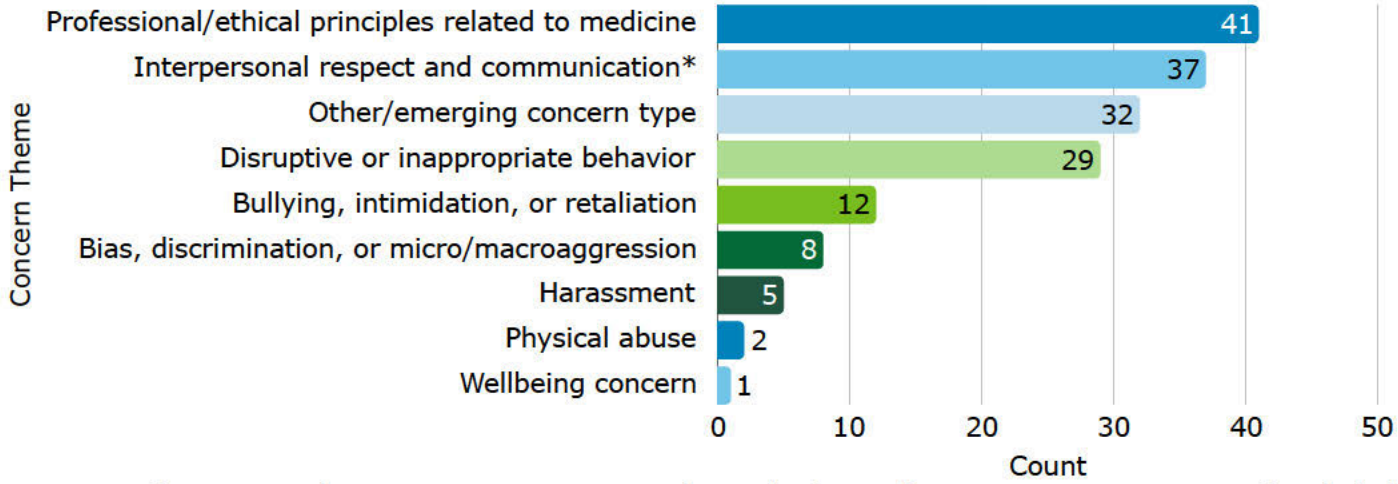
53%
Anonymous

62%
Allowed Follow-Up

14%
Peer Messenger Response

Primary Concern Themes

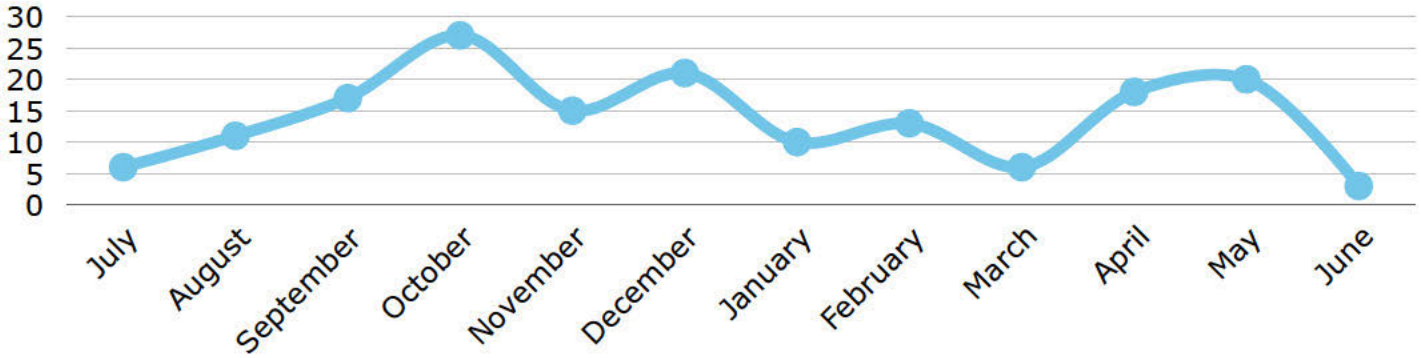
BSAFE Categories July 2025 - June 2026



*Interpersonal respect and communication = inconsiderate/rude, ineffective communication, and verbal abuse

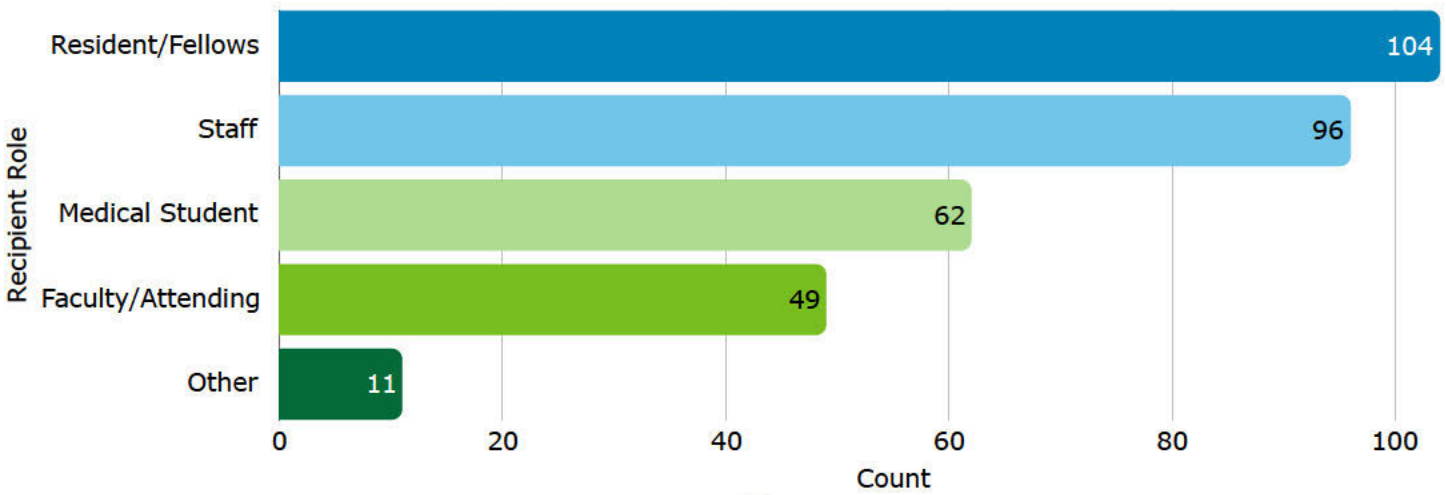
Concerns Received By Month

July 2025 - June 2026



Kudos Recognitions & Culture of Appreciation

Kudo Recipients by Role



322
Kudos Submitted

72
Departments, Units, Groups, and Partner Settings Represented

59%
Submitted by Medical Students

62%
Recognized Residents/Fellows or Staff

During the 2025–2026 academic year, the Professionalism Program received 322 kudos recognizing members of the School of Medicine community for exemplary professionalism, support, collaboration, and service. Kudos were submitted by individuals across the learning and working environment, with medical students accounting for the largest share of submissions.

Recognition reached learners, residents and fellows, faculty, staff, and colleagues across 72 departments, units, learner groups, and affiliated settings. Residents and fellows were the most frequently recognized group, followed closely by staff, demonstrating the important contributions of both clinical trainees and staff members to a respectful, supportive, and collaborative environment.

The kudos data also reflected meaningful peer-to-peer and cross-role appreciation. Medical students frequently recognized residents/fellows, fellow students, and faculty members, while staff members frequently recognized colleagues within their own teams. These patterns reinforce the value of maintaining accessible opportunities for community members to acknowledge positive behaviors and recognize those who contribute to the School of Medicine's culture of professionalism.

Recognition in Action

82 Medical students recognized residents/fellows

76 Staff recognized fellow staff members

55 Medical students recognized other medical students

35 Medical students recognized faculty/attendings

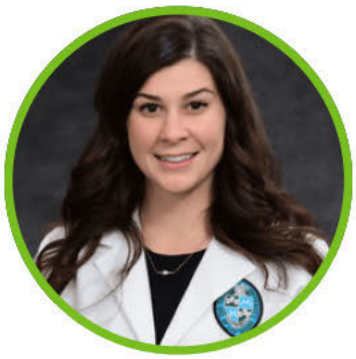
10 Owls Society

Tulane University School of Medicine is committed to creating a positive and professional learning environment that is deeply rooted in our Guiding Principles. Our community is committed to embracing these principles and emphasizes recognition of individuals who exemplify professionalism. Specifically, the Dean acknowledges those who have received ten or more exceptional reports by inducting them into the 10 Owls Society. Congratulations to the following School of Medicine community members who achieved this honor.



Miguel Bonilla Moreno, MD - OB/GYN Resident

Dr. Miguel Bonilla Moreno was repeatedly recognized for creating a supportive, inclusive learning environment for medical students. He was praised for his calm leadership, thoughtful teaching, constructive feedback, and willingness to ensure students felt prepared and included in patient care. Students also highlighted his compassion, professionalism, teamwork, and commitment to making both patients and learners feel heard, respected, and comfortable.



Alexandra Kruse, MD - OB/GYN Resident

Dr. Alexandra Kruse was consistently recognized for her exceptional teaching, kindness, and ability to make medical students feel valued members of the care team. Students praised her patient, constructive feedback; intentional inclusion of learners in clinical care and decision-making; calm leadership during busy shifts; and compassionate, empathetic care for patients. Her enthusiasm for OB/GYN, commitment to student growth, and ability to balance high clinical demands with warmth and professionalism made her a lasting role model for future physicians.

Faculty Recognition Award for Professionalism

Each year, Tulane School of Medicine recognizes faculty achievement in various areas, including Professionalism, to demonstrate sincere appreciation for faculty contributions to advancing the school's mission. The Professionalism Award recognizes a faculty member who fosters a positive and congenial workplace environment, demonstrates exceptional cultural competency and respect, and consistently promotes professional behavior among colleagues, trainees, and staff.



Shauna Levy, MD
Department of Surgery, Chief - Division of MIS/Bariatric Surgery

Dr. Shauna Levy, MD, MS, received the 2026 School of Medicine Faculty Award for Professionalism for her sustained commitment to respectful, inclusive, ethical, and compassionate leadership. Across her roles as Division Chief, Medical Director, Fellowship Director, educator, and mentor, Dr. Levy consistently creates an environment in which patients, learners, and colleagues feel heard, valued, and supported. She stands out for her ability to lead calmly through challenging situations, promote psychological safety and accountability, and center patient dignity in every interaction. Her advocacy for equitable obesity care, combined with her thoughtful mentorship and commitment to recognizing the contributions of others, has helped shape a division culture defined by trust, collegiality, and shared purpose.

SAIDE Staff Recognition Program

Staff Advocacy, Involvement, Development and Engagement (SAIDE) is a School of Medicine council focused on strengthening the staff experience through advocacy, engagement, professional development, and workplace-culture initiatives. SAIDE brings together staff representatives from across the School of Medicine to help elevate staff perspectives, support opportunities for growth and advancement, promote fairness, and foster a more connected, respectful, and inclusive working environment.

The SAIDE Staff Retention & Recognition Subcommittee specifically explores ways to ensure staff members feel valued, recognized, and supported in realizing their professional goals. Its work is grounded in the understanding that meaningful recognition, opportunities for development, and a sense of belonging are important contributors to staff engagement and retention.

A key component of this work is the Staff Kudos Program, developed in partnership with the Professionalism Program. Through the Professionalism Program's kudos submission process, members of the School of Medicine community can recognize staff colleagues who demonstrate exceptional service, go above and beyond in their roles, or exemplify one or more of the School of Medicine's Guiding Principles.

The Professionalism Program provides an accessible, ongoing avenue for positive recognition, while the SAIDE Staff Retention & Recognition Subcommittee helps elevate selected kudos through monthly and tri-annual recognition opportunities. Monthly honorees receive personalized acknowledgment from the Dean and are highlighted through School of Medicine communications. Tri-annual honorees receive additional recognition and a customized award. Together, this partnership helps make everyday examples of professionalism, service, collaboration, and excellence visible across the School of Medicine while reinforcing a culture in which staff contributions are noticed, appreciated, and celebrated.



Looking Ahead

Building on this year's progress, the Professionalism Program will continue to strengthen the learning environment, enhance communication, and foster a culture of respect, accountability, and psychological safety across the Tulane University School of Medicine community. Priorities for the upcoming academic year include:

Evaluation & Continuous Improvement

The Program will implement satisfaction surveys for individuals who voluntarily provide contact information for follow-up after submitting a concern, as well as for those who receive a Peer Messenger "cup of coffee" conversation. These surveys will help assess whether outreach, communication, and intervention processes are experienced as respectful, supportive, and effective. In preparation for a broader culture reassessment in 2027, the Program will also continue to monitor trends, feedback, and opportunities for improvement across the learning and working environment.

Expanded Peer Messenger Development and Support

The Program will explore collaboration with the Tulane Leadership Institute (TULI) to strengthen Peer Messenger development through coaching, workshops, and other professional development opportunities. Potential offerings include team coaching to build relational trust, shared accountability, and alignment among Peer Messengers; individual coaching to support leadership development and self-awareness; and targeted workshops on skills such as giving and receiving feedback, emotional intelligence, professional identity, and navigating challenging conversations. This layered approach will support both individual growth and a cohesive, well-equipped Peer Messenger network.

Staff Peer Messenger Expansion

The Program will continue exploring the development of a Staff Peer Messenger pathway to ensure that staff members have accessible, relatable support and that professionalism efforts are meaningfully represented across all areas of the School of Medicine community.

More Engaging, Audience-Specific Orientation and Education

Based on feedback from learners and stakeholders, professionalism orientation programming will continue to evolve into a more interactive, case-based format tailored to each audience. Use of TopHat and other engagement tools will support real-time discussion, application of concepts, and clearer understanding of professionalism expectations, reporting options, definitions, and examples relevant to students, residents, fellows, faculty, and staff.

Professionalism Toolkits and Practical Resources

The Program will develop and implement practical toolkits to support everyday professionalism skills and reinforce shared expectations across the School of Medicine. Planned resources may include guidance on giving and receiving feedback, mandatory reporting, creating and maintaining respectful, supportive, and inclusive learning environments, understanding intent versus impact, responding to concerns, and effectively "closing the loop" after reports or interventions.

Ongoing Trainee Leadership Engagement

The Program will establish recurring touchpoints with trainee leadership groups, including the Owl Club, Tulane Resident and Fellow Council, and Biomedical Sciences Master's Student Association. These meetings will help ensure that student and trainee leaders understand the Professionalism Program, available reporting and support pathways, and their role in increasing awareness among peers. Continued engagement will also create opportunities for two-way feedback about the learning environment and emerging concerns.

Resolution and Restorative Engagement Program Collaboration

The Program will explore collaboration with the Resolution and Restorative Engagement Program to provide a School of Medicine-specific presentation on restorative approaches and conversations. Using relevant hypotheticals and case-based discussion, this session would introduce learners, faculty, and staff to approaches that support accountability, repair, communication, and relationship-building following interpersonal harm or conflict.

Increased Awareness, Visibility, and Communication

The Program will continue expanding awareness of available resources through targeted marketing, signage, website updates, orientation materials, and ongoing communication with the School of Medicine community. These efforts will reinforce how to seek support, submit a concern or kudo, access professionalism resources, and engage with the Peer Messenger process. Greater visibility will help ensure that every member of the Tulane School of Medicine community understands that they have a role in maintaining a respectful, inclusive, and supportive learning and working environment.