Professional Ethics and Academic Policy (PEAP)

Introduction to the Professional Ethics and Academic Policy
The Orvis School of Nursing, at the University of Nevada, Reno is dedicated to educating nursing professionals. Essential components of this education are truthfulness, insight and respect.

Each member of the School of Nursing community, whether student, faculty or staff holds himself or herself and others to the highest standards based on the values of excellence, respect, diversity, integrity and accountability.

Students enrolled in the Orvis School of Nursing are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the values of this institution of higher education. Each student is obligated to refrain from violating academic and professional nursing ethics principles and non-academic standards of standard outlined in the succeeding pages.

Honor Pledge:
The following honor pledge will be included and signed (on each examination), (with the receipt of every syllabus), (with each assignment):

“On my honor, I pledge that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance on this (exam) (syllabus) (assignment) (care plan) (paper) (project)”

The pledge will be completed in several ways such as:
• Student will write and sign the pledge
• Faculty will preprint the pledge on tests and student will initial it
• Faculty will include the pledge on an online quiz/test and ask students to indicate their online verification

Professional Ethics and Academic policy violations:
Plagiarism
Cheating on exams
Improper use of the internet
Unauthorized use of electronic device for or during examinations (cell phone, PDA, calculator)
Unauthorized collaboration
Alteration of graded assignment
Fabrication and falsification of data (patient or otherwise) or university documents (e.g., letters and transcripts), etc.
Lying
Facilitating academic dishonesty
Infringement of the rights of others
Violation of any rules and regulations of the University of Nevada and the School of Nursing (e.g., as outlined in the course syllabi, catalog, academic program manuals, website)
Definitions

Plagiarism
Submission of the same or substantially similar work of another person, such as an author or classmate

Improper documentation of quotations, words, ideas, or paraphrased passages taken from published or unpublished sources

Use of the results of another student’s work (e.g., exam, papers, lab data, nursing care plan or other patient evaluation documentation) while representing it as one’s own

Unauthorized submission of a paper as original work in one course when the paper has received credit in another course

Cheating on Examinations
Use of unauthorized materials (e.g., devices, notes, books) during an in-class, WEB-CT or take-home examination.

Consultation of unauthorized materials while being excused (e.g., on a bathroom break) from an examination room

Copying answers from another student or allowing another student to copy your answers

Unauthorized discussion of an exam’s content during its administration

Obtaining an examination or answers to an examination prior to its administration

Studying from an old exam whose circulation was prohibited by the instructor

Failing to comply with designated time limits for an academic evaluation without authorization

Acting as a substitute for another or utilizing another as a substitute during an academic evaluation of any type

Improper use of Internet
Plagiarism from a published or unpublished Internet source

Improper or lack of documentation of an Internet source

Use of paper writing services or paper databases on the Internet

Posting of patient/client data or photographs

Unauthorized Use of Electronic Devices
Consultation of unauthorized electronic devices (e.g., calculators, cellular phones, PDAs, computers) during examinations
Use of electronic devices to communicate within or outside an examination room (e.g., use of cellular phones is not permitted during an exam)

Storage of test answers, class notes and other references in electronic devices for use during examination

Improper use during examination of email, text paging, beaming, and instant messaging

Transmittal of patient/client data or photographs

**Unauthorized Collaboration**
Collaboration on homework assignments, papers, reports unless explicitly assigned or approved by faculty

**Alteration of Graded Assignments**
Submission of an examination or assignment for regarding after making changes to the original answers on test

**Forgery and Falsification**
Falsification or invention of data in such things as laboratory experiments, data analysis, patient evaluation

Citation of nonexistent sources or creation of false information in an assignment

Attributing to a source ideas or information not included in the source

Forgery of university documents, such as academic transcripts and letters of reference

**Lying**
Request for special consideration from faculty or university officials based upon false information or deception

Fabrication of a medical or emergency excuse as a reason for needing an extension on an assignment or for missing an examination or clinical

Claiming falsely to have completed and/or turned in an assignment

Falsely reporting an ethics violation by another student

**Facilitating Academic Dishonesty**
Intentionally or knowingly aiding another student to commit a violation of academic conduct

Allowing another student to copy from one’s examination paper during administration of the exam, or another student’s work of any kind.

Providing copies of course material whose circulation was prohibited (e.g., exams or assignments) to students enrolled in or planning to take that course
Taking an examination or completing an assignment for another, or permitting one to do so

**Unfair Competition**
Willfully damaging the academic efforts of other students

Stealing another student’s academic materials (e.g., book, notes, assignment, computer disks, etc.)

Denying another student needed resources such as hiding library materials or stealing lab equipment

**Infringement on the Rights of Others**
Using behavior that jeopardizes the rights or safety of members of the OSN community, or jeopardizes the orderly functioning of University related activities

**Violation of any of the rules and regulations of the University of Nevada Reno and the Orvis School of Nursing** include but are not limited to illegal use of drugs, firearms and sexual harassment

**Professional Code of Ethics**
Each student enrolled in the University of Nevada, Orvis School of Nursing is expected to uphold the professional code of ethics established for and by the nursing profession and as defined by the School. Ethics is foundational to the nursing profession. The nursing profession expresses its moral obligations and professional values through the Code of Ethics for Nurses (ANA, 2001). Each student should read the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics and be accountable for its contents.

**Professional Ethics**
In its Code of Ethics for Nurses, the American Nurses Association has stated that: “ethics is an essential part of the foundation of nursing. Nursing has a distinguished history of concern for the welfare of the sick, injured, vulnerable and for social justice. This concern is embodied in the provision of care to individuals and the community. Nursing encompasses the prevention of illness, the alleviation of suffering, and the protection, promotion, and restoration of health in the care of individuals, families, groups, and communities”. (American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements, ANA website). Nursing students are expected not only to adhere to the morals and norms of the profession, but also to embrace them as part of what it means to be a nurse. The nurse recognizes that his/her first obligation is to the patient’s welfare and that all other needs and duties are secondary; the nursing student adheres to this same value. An ethics code makes the professional goals, values, and obligation of a nursing student more explicit, assisting the student in the development of his/her professional ethics.

A nursing student at the School of Nursing will University of Nevada Orvis School of Nursing will strive to act in a professional, ethical manner in accordance with the Code of Ethics for nurses, and the Professional Academic and Ethics Policy. He/she will incorporate the following into his/her clinical practice:

1. Read the School of Nursing’s Professional Academic and Ethics policy and be accountable for its contents.

2. Be responsible for his/her own learning and clinical practice and honor other students’ right to learn and be successful in academic and clinical environments. (Example: develop own
knowledge base through study and inquiry, recognize other’s right to do well on their written work, have access to reserved materials, and have access to their own preparation materials and supplies used in clinical areas).

3 Demonstrate respect in verbal and non-verbal behaviors to all others in clinical and academic settings. (Example: Interact with others without using threats of, or commission of, physical harm, verbal abuse, unwanted sexual advances or contact, or other unwarranted physical contact. Arrive to class and clinicals on time; turn off beepers and cell phones in class, etc.).

4 Assess patient status carefully upon assuming responsibility for his/her care.

5 Provide safe, competent care, seeking assistance when personal knowledge and/or skill are not adequate. Avoid use of any substances that would impair clinical ability or judgment. (Example: prepare for clinical assignment to develop required knowledge and skill; review patient’s medical record; seek assistance according to course and curricular objectives)

6 Provide the same standard of care to all patients and families regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sexual preference, disability, religion, economic status, employment status, or the nature of their health problem. Accept that others have the right to their own cultural beliefs and values and respect their choices. (Example: demonstrate compassion and respect for every individual; provide the best quality of care possible to all patients; be non-judgmental of cultural differences).

7 Provide patient care without expectation of, or acceptance of, any remuneration. (Example: do not accept gratuities or personal gifts of monetary value).

8 Document in a thorough, accurate, truthful, and timely manner data that reflects findings from one’s own personal assessment, care, interventions, teaching, or the patient’s and/or family’s response to those activities. (Example: documentation errors are corrected in an acceptable manner, documentation is unaltered, vital signs are recorded at the time they are measured, and late entries are duly noted).

9 Act in a manner that contributes to the development and maintenance of an ethical educational and practice environment. Recognize that the primary commitment in clinical practice is to the patient and that respectful interactions are expected. (Example: act as a role model for other students and colleagues; speak up if another student is speaking disrespectfully to classmates or faculty; work through appropriate organizational channels to share concerns about situations that jeopardize patient care or affect the educational environment; advocate patient safety).

10 Complete legally required HIPAA training and University or clinical site requirements regarding confidentiality as required during the academic year. Use patient data in all school work, papers, presentations, research findings and in the clinical setting in a manner that is accurate, truthful,
and confidential. Patient data must have a justifiable reason for its presence. Acknowledge real
data gaps that may exist in written work. Identify patient in paper by initials, not full name.

11 Refrain from unauthorized use or possession of school or clinical setting’s equipment, patient’s
belongings, or items dispersed or intended for patient use. (Example: Do not download
University software onto a personal PC or palm pilot; do not use a hospital computer terminal
for personal use such as playing online games; do not take a patient’s prescribed medication for
personal use).

Reporting Ethical or Academic Misconduct:
The faculty and students at the Orvis School of Nursing expect that every student will maintain a high
standard of individual honor and academic honesty while studying at the University. Any student who
commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline.

Allegations of academic ethics and behavioral misconduct are investigated and resolved using a
standardized procedure. Generally faculty members initiate investigations, either by detecting
violations themselves or by receiving reports from teaching assistants, clinical site staff, students and
other university staff members.

Students or staff who witness violations should report these to the appropriate course faculty, or the
Chair of the PEAP committee. The faculty and/or chair of the PEAP committee will follow up on the
reports by scheduling a meeting of the appropriate PEAP committee members.

Both students and faculty should follow these procedures:

1. Overt violations of the Ethics Code that are well substantiated should be referred
directly to the PEAP committee.
2. In the case of suspected academic ethics violations, the faculty member should meet
with the student or students involved in the incident and the Chair of the PEAP
committee to discuss the accusation. If the PEAP Chair and the faculty member believe
the accusation has no merit, the issue can be dismissed, but the conversation must be
documented and sent forward to the Director of the School of Nursing.
3. If after meeting with the student(s) involved, the PEAP Chair and faculty member
believe the incident has merit, the PEAP committee members will be contacted and a
meeting scheduled within the next 5 days. The PEAP committee will notify the Director
of the School of Nursing of their Decision within 24 hours. Within 72 hours of the
decision, the student will be notified of the PEAP committee’s decision by certified mail
(this will allow for delivery of the letter via certified mail).

PEAP Hearings:

A Professional Ethics and Academic Panel will be constituted each year, and will meet annually in the
Fall semester (after elections are held) and as needed thereafter. Five faculty members will be elected:
two teaching predominantly in the baccalaureate program, two teaching in the graduate program, and
one outside faculty will be selected from the full-time faculty of the University by the Director of the
Nursing Program. The chair of the committee will be chosen by the members. One committee member must be a tenured faculty. The term of office is one year and can be renewed; a rotating election process will be used so that each year ½ of the committee is comprised of newly elected members. In addition to faculty, one student from each of the programs will be elected from the student body to serve on the committee. The composition of each PEAP hearing committee will be comprised of one ½ of the committee membership (1 faculty from the baccalaureate program, one from the graduate program and one student from the same program as the student involved in the hearing, along with the outside committee member). The committee chair will make the hearing member selection, after a discussion with all committee members.

The PEAP committee chair will schedule a meeting within 5 days upon determining that any student incident has merit. At each hearing, the Director of the School of Nursing will appoint a recording secretary.

Students and faculty will submit evidence directly to the chair of the PEAP committee 48 hours prior to the meeting.

The PEAP hearing is an orderly discussion, not a legal proceeding. Legal representation is not permitted. The proceedings will be kept confidential by all parties. The hearing proceeds in this manner:

- The party initiating the complaint will present an account of the events of the charge of academic or behavioral misconduct
- Witnesses will be called to testify if appropriate
- The alleged violator may refute the charges
- The faculty and violator will be allowed to make closing arguments
- At the conclusion of the meeting, all parties will withdraw, and the deliberations of the PEAP panel will be held in private
- The alleged honor code violator and the initiating party will be informed in writing by the Chair of the PEAP panel within 5 working days of the panel’s decision
- Depending on the severity and type of infraction, the student may be removed from the clinical or classroom immediately after a decision has been achieved. Such decisions will be communicated verbally to the student by the Chair of PEAP. Written confirmation will follow. Coordinators for the students program options (DNP, FNP, MSN, RN-BSN, BSN) will be notified by the Chair of the PEAP committee immediately following the decision of the committee verbally and by e-mail.

Any student found not guilty will be exonerated of all charges

Students found guilty face the following potential sanctions, based on the Panel’s determination of the severity of the infraction:

- Failure on an assignment
- Lowering of a grade or failure in a course (depending on the faculty syllabi)
- Notation on a student’s transcript of an academic misconduct
- Suspension or expulsion from the University

In the case of students with prior offenses, the minimum sanction the PEAP panel may impose is failure in a course with a notation on the student’s transcript, which states that the grade resulted from academic misconduct.
The Director of the School of Nursing maintains a file or meeting proceedings in a confidential file.

The PEAP chair submits a report for the monthly faculty meetings. Students are not identified by name.

**Appeals Process:**
Students may appeal decisions of the PEAP panel in writing to the Director of the School of Nursing within 10 business days of the PEAP’s decision. The student’s statement will set forth the grounds for the appeal. The Director will have access to all documents reviewed during the PEAP panel’s hearing. The Director may meet with the accused and when necessary, with the accuser before reaching the final decision.

The Director will present a written response to the student. Copies of all appeals correspondence will be sent to the chair of the PEAP committee, and Sally Morgan, Director of Office of Student Conduct. PEAP members will be notified of the Director's response by the chair of the PEAP committee.

**Records:**
Confidential records of the PEAP panel will be kept in the Director's office.

**Student Experience:**
Being accused of an ethics violation is a stressful process for students. Students are encouraged to be completely honest in all discussions associated with this process and take advantage of University resources:

The PEAP Chairperson will provide an overview of the process and procedures associated with evaluations, Ethics Code violations, and advice about preparing for the Professional Ethics and Academic Policy hearing.

The counseling center can be of assistance with any personal difficulties during this process.

In advance of the Professional Ethics and Academic Policy hearing, a student will receive written notification of the hearing date, time and location from the Chair of the panel. Students are required to attend the hearing as scheduled.

**Faculty Experience:**
Faculty members should enforce violations of academic ethics equally and consistently. All suspicions of academic misconduct, no matter how minor, must be investigated.

As discussed earlier, faculty must contact the Chair of the PEAP committee to discuss accusations of academic misconduct. Coordinators for the program of study must also be notified. This is necessary to determine if an accused student has previous violations of ethics. Faculty members must submit documentation of all direct settlements and hearing requests to the Chair of the PEAP committee.

If a PEAP committee meeting is necessary, it will be scheduled to fit the faculty member’s schedule.
Faculty are expected to compile evidence and to present their account of a case during a PEAP hearing. A faculty member on the PEAP committee will be chosen to assist the faculty with this preparation and process.

Faculty members are encouraged to contact the PEAP chair to discuss concerns and questions about the meeting.

(Adapted from the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing)

Approved by the Orvis School of Nursing Faculty: January 25, 2010

Approved by the Director of the Orvis School of Nursing:

Patsy L. Ruchala, DNSc, RN January 25, 2010
By signing this document, I verify that I have thoroughly read the UNR-Orvis School of Nursing Professional Ethics and Academic Policy.

Printed Name: ____________________________________________

Signature: ________________________________________________

Date: ____________________________________________________