

**UTRGV**<sup>TM</sup>



**UT Health**  
Rio Grande Valley<sup>TM</sup>

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*School of Medicine*

## **Faculty Handbook**



*Office of Faculty Affairs*

*Rev. February 14, 2024*

**(Anticipated approval by Dean's Advisory Committee in March 2024)**

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**SOM Vision:**

To transform the health of the Rio Grande Valley and beyond.

**University Vision:**

To be one of the nation's leaders in higher education, its premier Hispanic-serving institution, and a highly engaged bilingual university, with exceptional educational, research, and creative opportunities that serve as catalysts for transformation in the Rio Grande Valley and beyond.

**SOM Strategic Plan Overview:****SOM Mission:**

We will transform the health of the Rio Grande Valley and beyond by providing advanced academic medicine through these five pillars:

- Innovative Education
- Life-Changing Research and Discoveries
- High Quality Patient-Centered Care
- Serving our Community
- Sustainability and a Culture of Entrepreneurship

**Values:**

In addition to the UTRGV Values of excellence; shared governance; diversity, access and inclusion; leadership; inquiry, discovery and creativity; health and well-being; and engagement and impact; the school of medicine's core values include:

- **Open Communication & Transparency:** Share information openly across all levels (of the school) to ingrain a collaborative and trustworthy environment.
- **Community Focus:** Commitment to improving health outcomes and reducing health disparities of at-risk populations through community and population-based interventions.
- **Cultural Awareness:** Integration of knowledge, awareness, and empathy to successfully work with the diverse and unique needs of any community.
- **Empathy & Compassion:** Care for and understand others to provide support and achieve positive outcomes.
- **Good Stewardship:** Selfless service (for the common good) to promote accountability and a culture of responsibility.
- **Innovation & Transformation:** Embrace change and promote creativity to shape the future of academic medicine.
- **Integrity:** Act with honor, honesty, and truthfulness. Know and do the right thing in all undertakings – learning, discovery, patient care, service, and entrepreneurship.
- **Respect, Collegiality & Inclusive Citizenship:** Treat people with respect and kindness to create a community of Inclusivity, cooperation, and connectedness.

**Themes:****Innovative Education**

- A. Prepare learners for medical practice with a solid foundation in medical science and an orientation toward the social determinants of health.
- B. Cultivate a safe and inclusive teaching, learning, and working environment to ensure learner, faculty, and staff success.
- C. Invest to foster excellence in our educational mission, evaluating and building the infrastructure necessary to deliver innovative medical education.

**Life-Changing Research and Discoveries**

- A. Increase the impact of Biomedical and Clinical Research to improve health in the Rio Grande Valley and Beyond.
- B. Facilitate synergies in the research enterprise that will further the School of Medicine's focus on health and disease in the underrepresented populations.
- C. Strengthen and sustain the biomedical research workforce through mentoring, training and education.

**High Quality Patient-Centered Care**

- A. Continue the growth of the UT Health RGV Clinical Enterprise to provide clinical services to the RGV and beyond.
- B. Improve practice plan productivity, efficiency, and sustainability.
- C. Become a self-sustaining clinical enterprise that supports the school of medicine.
- D. Leverage the use of data-driven decision making through improved utilization of clinical data.

**Serving Our Community**

- A. Engage with external partners and stakeholders to promote and sustain the mission of the School of Medicine.
- B. Improve the mental and physical health and quality of life for the RGV's diverse and growing population.
- C. Work with high schools to enhance programs that facilitate students' entry into health professions education, including medicine for the primary purpose of achieving mission appropriate diversity outcomes among the SOM students.

**Sustainability and a Culture of Entrepreneurship**

- A. Sustainability in the Clinical Enterprise  
Grow clinical revenues to sustain the School of Medicine, in line with the trend seen across medical schools.

- B. Sustainability in Research  
Increase extramural funding to sustain research in established basic science areas, as well as development of a new clinical research foundation.
- C. Sustainability in Medical Education  
Ensure and grow sufficiency of SOM resources to support and sustain the medical education program.
- D. Sustainability in Innovation and Entrepreneurship  
Encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, while leveraging best practices across AMCs to shape the way our SOM operates and continues to evolve.

SOM Strategic Plan (2022- 2024):

[Strategic Plan - Mission, Vision, and Core Values](#)

**Office of the Dean:**

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Dean, School of Medicine  
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**SOM Diversity:**

The UTRGV SOM's commitment to recruit and retain medical students, faculty, residents and staff from diverse backgrounds stems from the school's unique geographic location along the border of the U.S. and Mexico, a region with rich bicultural traditions, but also one burdened by health disparities. The school's vision is to transform the health of the Rio Grande Valley and embrace mission-appropriate diversity aligned with the school's obligation to meet the health needs of underserved populations in the community and beyond. For our Equal Opportunity policy click [here](#).

**University Values:**

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley has seven values, which include: Excellence, Diversity, Access, and Inclusion, Inquiry, Discovery, and Creativity, Engagement and Impact, Shared Governance, Leadership and Health and Well-being.

[Mission Vision and Values | UTRGV](#)

## **Section 1: UTRGV SOM Promotion and Tenure Guidelines**

Faculty are distinguished by their respective track, academic rank and promotion pathway. An environment of academic freedom is required for faculty to pursue scholarly activities and academic expression, and an inclusive culture of non-discrimination and non-harassment to allow faculty to teach, conduct research and provide clinical care and services to develop their UTRGV careers along these promotion and tenure guidelines.

All appointment, promotion and tenure decisions are based on merit as to the applicant's activities and scholarship as provided in the application and supporting documents.

Promotion and Tenure guidelines can be found on the *Office of Faculty Affairs* blackboard site [mycourses.utrgv.edu](https://mycourses.utrgv.edu) (UTRGV login credentials required).

## **Section 2: Faculty Assembly Bylaws**

These Bylaws provide a framework within which the faculty of the School of Medicine ("SOM") participates in the educational and decision-making processes of the School. These Bylaws are valid to the extent they comply with policies, procedures, and processes set forth by the State of Texas, The University of Texas System ("UT System") Regents' Rules and Regulations, the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley ("UTRGV") and the UTRGV Handbook of Operating Procedures ("HOP").

SOM Bylaws can be found online at [University of Texas Rio Grande Valley - UTRGV School of Medicine Bylaws](#)

## **Section 3: Professionalism—Code of Conduct**

**UTRGV Standards of Conduct ADM 04-101** - The purpose of this policy is to provide the standards of conduct to which all employees and administrators of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) should adhere. UTRGV [Policy Number: ADM 04.101 Standards of Conduct](#) can be found at the University Handbook of Operating Procedures found at [Handbook of Operating Procedures](#).

## **UTRGV Faculty Rights and Responsibilities**

Faculty members at UTRGV are entitled to rights, with associated responsibilities, related to their clinical care, research, and teaching. They must use those rights and responsibilities in a professional manner. The full policy can be found in the [Handbook of Operating Procedures](#) as [Policy Number: ADM 06-106](#). This policy sets forth the rights and responsibilities of faculty members at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV).

**Non-Clinical Faculty- American Association of University Professor (AAUP)**

*The Statement on Professional Ethics that follows sets forth those general standards that serve as a reminder of the variety of responsibilities assumed by all members of the profession.*

AAUP's full professional ethics statement can be found at [aaup.org](http://aaup.org).

**Clinical Faculty-American Medical Association (AMA)**

The *Code of Medical Ethics (Code)* of the American Medical Association (AMA) is rooted in an understanding of the goals of medicine as a profession, which dates back to the 5th century BCE and the Greek physician Hippocrates, to relieve suffering and promote well-being in a relationship of fidelity with the patient. As adopted by the young AMA in 1847, the *Code* drew significantly on the work of the English physician-philosopher Thomas Percival, whose 1803 code of medical ethics set standards of conduct relative to hospitals and other charities.

AMA Code of Medical Ethics can be located at [ama-assn.org](http://ama-assn.org).

**SOM Graduate Medical Education (GME) - Professional Conduct Policy**

To provide guidance regarding expectations for the conduct of all UTRGV-SOM residents. Residents are responsible for fulfilling any and all obligations that the GME Office, Participating Institutions and Residency Programs expect and deem necessary.

SOM Graduate Medical Education Professional Conduct Policy can be found on the Graduate Medical Education UTRGV School of Medicine [utrgv.edu](http://utrgv.edu).

**UTRGV Compliance**

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley encourages employees to raise compliance related concerns and to report any suspected violations of law, regulations or policy.

Employees are encouraged to address compliance concerns through UTRGV's normal administrative channels. If you have compliance related questions or wish to report suspected compliance violations of any kind:

1. Talk to your supervisor,
2. Contact the UTRGV Compliance Officer or Compliance Manager, or
3. Call the Compliance Hotline- **Toll Free Hotline (877) 882-3999**

[Compliance Hotline/Raising Questions and Concerns | UTRGV](#)

#### **Section 4: UTRGV SOM Education related policies: Student Mistreatment; Teacher-Learner Compact**

The UTRGV School of Medicine strives to achieve a respectful, cooperative, and professional learning environment for our students, faculty, and staff in all educational and clinical sites. For students to be engaged academically, their learning environment must be free from mistreatment, coercion, undue influence, and other unacceptable behaviors that negatively influence their ability to perform their best.

Behaviors that constitute mistreatment and other undue negative influence are unacceptable, and allegations and complaints of mistreatment will be addressed accordingly. Allegations will be fully investigated, and if they are found to be true, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken to address the unacceptable behavior.

In any case where a student experiences mistreatment from a faculty member, resident, staff member or patient, the student should report the mistreatment. Reports of mistreatment or unprofessional conduct may be submitted by phone, via calling the Students Rights and Responsibilities Line 956-665-5375 (Edinburg), 956-882-5141 (Brownsville) or via the [Student Mistreatment Form](#).

As per the AAMC, the medical learning environment is expected to facilitate students' acquisition of the professional and collegial attitudes necessary for effective, caring and compassionate health care. The development and nurturing of these attitudes is enhanced and, indeed, based on the presence of mutual respect between teacher and learner. A characteristic of this respect is the expectation that all participants in the educational program assume their responsibilities in a manner that enriches the quality of the learning process. See [Teacher Learner Compact](#)

#### **Section 5: Policies and Procedures**

##### **The University of Texas Board of Regents' Rules and Regulations**

The University of Texas System operates under several sets of rules and regulations, including the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents and the U. T. System Wide Policies (UTS Policies), in addition to applicable state and federal laws. U. T. System Administration is also governed by a Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP).

The Regents' *Rules and Regulations*, found [here](#), are the official repository of policies and procedures established for U. T. System by the Board of Regents. The UTS Policies and the HOP are approved by the Chancellor.



### The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Handbook of Operating Procedures

This Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley contains policies and procedures for the governance of UTRGV. Policies connect UTRGV's mission to individual conduct, clarify institutional expectations, support compliance with laws and regulations, mitigate risk, and enhance productivity and efficiency in operations. UTRGV and its activities are subject to the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System. In the event of any conflict between the Regents' *Rules and Regulations* and any policies or procedures in this HOP, the Regents' *Rules and Regulations* shall govern.

This HOP does not constitute a contract between UTRGV and its employees and is subject to change by UTRGV at any time following the process established in HOP 01-101. Such changes are effective whenever approved by the President and posted on the website. Although UTRGV will attempt to timely update the HOP to reflect changes in policies, in state or federal laws, or the Regents' *Rules and Regulations* upon which these policies are based, because of publishing, editing, and review schedules, this HOP may from time to time contain information that is outdated or no longer applicable.

[Handbook of Operating Procedures | UTRGV.](#)

## **Section 6: UT Health Rio Grande Valley Clinical Practice Plan**

UT Health Rio Grande Valley, the clinical practice of the UTRGV School of Medicine, dedicated team of physicians to provide you with the highest quality care. We are an innovative and growing academic medical center, engaged in cutting-research that focuses on you and your healthcare needs. At our care clinics, you will receive timely, individual care from our expert team of health practitioners committed to helping you and your family lead healthy and happy lives.

The policies for UT Health RGV can be found here: [UT Health RGV Policies & Procedures](#)

For additional information contact Dr. Julio Gonzalez- Director of Clinical Quality Management at [julio.gonzalez@utrgv.edu](mailto:julio.gonzalez@utrgv.edu) or at 956-296-1432.

## **Section 7: SOM Research**

UTRGV School of Medicine (SOM) is transforming and enriching the lives of the people of the Rio Grande Valley and beyond. Through the basic, translational and clinical sciences, current research support includes:

- Facilitates and also completes the first level of review and approval of all SOM proposals prior to submission to sponsors.

- Documents all cost share commitments, facilitates approval for any variances in standard indirect cost recovery, as well as other post-award services such as coordinating PI's request on no-cost extensions and carryforward inquiries to grant sponsors.
- Maintains an updated profile on SOM research resources including a list of research faculty/staff and research facilities; communicates updated funding opportunities to research faculty/staff.
- Advocates and promotes research learning for medical students, residents and fellows by sponsoring technical workshops and research seminars; distributing funds to support scholarly work including the cost for scientific journal publications and presentation in professional learned societies; sponsors an annual research symposium to promote scientific networking and community outreach.

### **Mission**

The SOM Research will transform the health of the Rio Grande Valley and beyond by providing advanced academic medicine through: Life Changing Discoveries, Service to Community, Sustainability through Entrepreneurship. [School of Medicine Research | UTRGV](#)

### **Section 8: UTRGV School of Medicine Libraries**

Mario E. Ramirez, M.D., Library (Harlingen Clinical Education Bldg)  
 Myles and Sylvia Aaronson Library (Edinburg Medical Education Bldg)  
[School of Medicine Libraries | UTRGV](#)