GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER - Office Memorandum

DATE: November 30, 2015

TO: All Georgetown Law Students

FROM: Prof. Steven Goldblatt, Chair
Professional Responsibility Committee;
Michael S. Frisch, Ethics Counsel

RE: Exams, Papers, and the Student Disciplinary Code

As the end of the Fall Semester approaches, we want to identify the types of Student Disciplinary Code violations that are of special importance at this time of year. You are being trained to become lawyers and adherence to rules is essential in our profession. You are responsible for knowing and complying with all rules governing exams and papers.

We would like to be certain that everyone is fully aware of the school’s policies in these areas. We also suggest that all students should be familiar with the terms of the Student Disciplinary Code, provided in the 2015-2016 Student Handbook of Academic Policies, in much the same way that you will be expected to be familiar with the rules of professional conduct when you graduate and enter the practice of law.

Special concerns are addressed below:

1. **Plagiarism in Papers and Examinations.** You are cautioned that plagiarism is an issue for papers and examinations. The rules of attribution of the work of others apply in any work that you submit for grading. Thus, cutting and pasting the work of another and submitting as your own work in an examination is as much plagiarism as it would be if you appropriated material in a paper without proper attribution. The consequences of committing plagiarism are serious and we urge you to pay special attention to the discussion appearing in the section in the Code on Plagiarism, outlined on pages 105-106 of the Student Handbook. The Committee has suspended students from the Law Center, with accompanying academic transcript notations and loss of credit, in responding to past plagiarism violations. We hope you will not let haste or carelessness result in your crossing the lines set forth in the Code. Please read the section on Plagiarism and exercise appropriate care.

2. **Collaboration on Take-Home Examinations is Prohibited.** Students are expected to strictly follow the rules for take-home examinations and discussing the exam with anyone while the exam is being taken is no more appropriate in a take-home exam than it would be in a monitored exam. Unless specifically permitted by the professor, students may not discuss an examination with anyone prior to submitting the completed examination to the Office of the Registrar. Students should be aware that any discussion—with other students, faculty, or anyone else—about the examination, no matter how casual, may be considered a violation of the Code. For instance, any online discussion of an examination is prohibited. Students are not permitted to share examination questions or their work product with others. Collaboration is a serious ethical violation that compromises the integrity of our examination processes. The Law Center carefully investigates whenever there is a suggestion that there may have been collaboration on take home examination answers. In aid of such investigations, advanced software programs are used to compare examinations for substantially similar answers suggesting collaboration.
3. **ANONYMITY IN EXAMS.** Do not reveal to your professor any information in the exam answers that would in any manner identify you as the author of your examination.

4. **POST-EXAMINATION COMMUNICATIONS.** If you have an issue relating to an exam or exam instructions, you have one place to go to and that is the Office of the Registrar. **DO NOT CONTACT THE PROFESSOR.** Sending an anonymous email or note to a professor that relates to the examination violates this rule. Any questions about the examination must be directed to the Office of the Registrar, not the professor or anyone else.

5. **DISCUSSING EXAMS WITH FELLOW STUDENTS.** Because exams are not all administered at the same time, you may not discuss the exam with other students until grades are posted.

6. **IN-CLASS EXAMINATIONS.** Listen to and follow the instructions on the examination video.

7. **SANCTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH LATE TAKE-HOME AND IN-CLASS EXAMINATIONS.** Students should review Section 402 of the Code, pages 102-105 of the Student Handbook, which outlines how the Law Center treats the late return of take-home examinations, late arrivals and missed examinations, and the submission of the wrong document (paper or examination) for grading. The penalties may be significant, including the possible receipt of an AF grade for the course, which is factored into the GPA as an earned F.

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The purpose of this memorandum is to alert all students to be careful to comply with these rules. Students should be sure that they understand the concept of plagiarism, the terms of the late submission rules and the prohibition against collaboration. In this regard our goal is to educate and we hope that these rules are never violated. We also strive to protect the 99++ percent of our students who comply with the rules and to ensure that those few who choose to disregard them do not gain an unfair advantage.