

College Procedure: 400.9 – Consensual Relationships

Policy Reference: 400 – Employee Ethics and Conduct
Responsible Department: Human Resources
Approval Authority: Cabinet
Procedure Owner: Vice President, Human Resources
Effective Date: 03/05/2012

Version Number: 3
Legal Counsel Reviewed (yes/no): Yes (Kim Blankenship, Bradley & Riley)
Scope: College-wide

Reason for Procedure

Consensual relations of concern to the college are those relationships of a romantic nature, entered into by an employee of the college, in which the parties involved have consented but where there is or appears to be a conflict of interest or a power differential. Consensual relationship guiding principles exist when there are interrelationships of employees, the interrelationship of an employee and a current student, an employee and a student currently enrolled in a program being taught by the faculty member, or an employee and a student athlete; presenting the appearance of a conflict of interest.

The procedure on consensual relationships is written to protect employees and students. It is designed to ensure power is not abused and to maintain an environment that is free of sexual harassment rather than to discourage constructive interpersonal relationships.

The Procedure

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Positive relationships between employees and students, peer employees, and between supervisors and their employees, enrich the college environment and are not discouraged. It is also natural that academic or employment-related interactions between some individuals may lead to personal friendships, which do not pose problems as long as they do not create a conflict of interest that could

cloud academic or employment decisions. The college’s position on consensual relationships is not intended to discourage the development of constructive non-romantic, non-sexual relationships between individuals with whom there exists a power differential. However, romantic or sexual relationships are fundamentally different which raises serious concerns.

A consensual romantic or sexual relationship between a student, a prospective student or subordinate employee may be exploitative in nature, leading to a conflict of interest for the person who is in the position of power, and can affect the environment for other students and/or employees or the manner in which they are treated. In keeping with this philosophy, employees of the college are not to develop relationships of a romantic or sexual nature with a student or prospective student. Managers and supervisors may not engage in a sexual, romantic or dating relationship with subordinate employees, including those outside of their direct reporting structure. Such relationships automatically create the appearance of a conflict of interest and will not be tolerated.

In each situation involving the appearance of a conflict of interest created by an apparent consenting relationship, a determination about what measures are appropriate will be made on a case-by-case basis from the facts of the particular situation. Appropriate measures may include disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Should a preexisting relationship exist between a faculty member and a student, when the student registers for the faculty members course(s) if no alternative arrangement can be made (e.g. same or similar course taught by a different faculty member) the faculty member needs to make the Dean aware of the relationship. The Dean (or designee) needs to monitor the grades, time spent with the faculty member during office hours (so other students have access to office hours), and any other possible negative affects while the student is taking the class. In circumstances when a preexisting relationship exists between a supervisor and an employee, the Employment of Relatives procedure will be followed.

Unwelcome romantic or sexual attention will lead to an investigation and possible disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Revision Log

Table 1 Revision Log

Version Number	Date Approved	Approved by	Description of Change
1	03/05/2012	Jim Choate, Vice President, Finance	New procedure
2	05/09/2017	Mick Starcevich, President	New template
3	07/10/2019	Cabinet	Procedure template