



CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Washington College's educational mission is promoted by professionalism in student faculty relationships and in supervisor/supervisee relationships. Professionalism is fostered by an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect in accordance with established standards of conduct. Taking note of the respect and trust accorded a staff or faculty member by a student and a supervisor by a supervisee, the faculty and staff recognize that they are presumed to make decisions regarding their relationships with students and supervisees which will not endanger this atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Faculty and staff should be aware of the possibility that an apparent consensual relationship with a student or supervisee may be interpreted (either now or at a later date) as non-consensual and, therefore, as sexual harassment. The power differential inherent in employee/student and supervisor/supervisee relationships may compromise the student's or supervisee's freedom to decide and call into question the consensual nature of the relationship. The potential exists for the student or supervisee to perceive coercion in suggestions involving activities outside those appropriate to professional relationships. Moreover, faculty and staff, particularly in relationships with students and persons under their supervision, need to be aware of potential conflicts of interest, perceptions of favoritism and the possible compromise of their evaluative / supervisory capacity. They also need to be aware that a relationship may give rise to a perception that the evaluative capacity of the faculty member or supervisor has been compromised. For the reasons outlined in this policy, the college strongly discourages these relationships.

- A. It is a violation of this policy for a faculty or staff member to undertake an amorous relationship or permit one to develop with a student or supervisee who is enrolled in the person's class or is subject to that person's supervision or evaluation, even when both parties appear to have consented to the relationship.
- B. Amorous relationships between students and faculty or staff members outside the instructional and supervisory context are also strongly discouraged.
- C. The College recognizes that consensual amorous relationships may exist prior to the time a student becomes a member of the faculty member's class or is placed in a situation

where the faculty or staff person must supervise or evaluate the student. It is also recognized that such a relationship may exist between co-employees prior to the time when one of those employees becomes the supervisor of the other. An amorous relationship is a recent amorous relationship if it is ongoing or has been in existence at any time within the six (6) months immediately preceding the assignment of the student or supervisee to the faculty or staff member. Where the faculty or staff member has, or has had, a recent amorous relationship with the student or supervisee the following procedures shall be followed:

- 1) If, at all possible, the student should be advised in his or her course selections to avoid course sections taught by the instructor with whom the student has or has had a recent consensual relationship. Efforts should likewise be made to place a subordinate under the supervision of another supervisor where the supervisor has or has had a recent consensual amorous relationship with the subordinate.
- 2) In the event it is not possible for the student to avoid the class taught by the faculty member or for the supervisee to avoid the supervision of the supervisor, the faculty member shall advise his or her department chair and Provost, and the supervisor shall advise his or her supervisor of the present or recent consensual amorous relationship and the following steps shall be taken in regards to students:
 - a. The department head shall appoint another instructor to evaluate the student's written work, such as essays, research papers, essay tests, care plans, etc.
 - b. The department head shall appoint another instructor to evaluate the student's non-written work or performance such as artistic performances, teaching practice or clinical practice.
 - c. When an appropriate instructor is not available to evaluate the student's work, the department chair or Provost will provide an alternative solution at no expense to the College.
 - d. A student should not be assigned to a faculty advisor with whom that student has or has had a recent consensual amorous relationship. The faculty advisor should request that the student be reassigned.

The following steps will be taken in regards to employees:

- e. A supervisor will request that his or her supervisor evaluate the supervisee and if such evaluation is not available, he or she will request that a supervisor of a related department evaluate the employee.
 - f. The supervisor will remove himself or herself from the consideration of the employee for promotion, hiring or determination of salary.
 - g. When an appropriate supervisor is not available to supervise the employee then the President in consultation with the Director of Human Resources decide if suitable supervision can be arranged or if one of the parties will be asked to resign.
- 3) A faculty or staff member who fails to follow the policy set forth in No. 2 above, and does not withdraw from participation in activities or decisions which may reward or penalize a student or supervisee with whom the faculty or staff member has or has had a recent consensual amorous relationship in accordance with this policy will be in violation of this policy and is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
- 4) Persons who are married, or were married, are included within the definition of those persons having, or who have had, a consensual amorous relationship. Likewise, persons in a domestic partner relationship are included in this policy.
- 5) A complaint alleging violations of the policy regarding consensual relationships may be filed by any person and directed to the Human Resources Office. Procedures to be followed when complaints occur are those listed in the Sexual Harassment Policy.