UW-Platteville Faculty Handbook: Chapter Five

Title*:* 5.03 Consensual Relations Policy

Keywords: consensual relations, consensual relationships, discrimination and harassment, conflict of interest

Policy Approval Date:

Policy Source and Authority for Approval: Faculty Senate

Policy Statement:
It is in the interest of the UW-Platteville to provide clear direction and educational opportunities to the university community about the professional risks associated with consensual romantic and/or sexual relationships where a definite power differential between parties exists. These relationships are of concern for two primary reasons.

1. Conflict of Interest
Conflicts of interest may arise in connection with consensual romantic and/or sexual relationships between faculty or other instructional staff and students, or between supervisors and subordinates. University policy and more general ethical principles preclude individuals from evaluating the work or academic performance of others with whom they have intimate familial relationships, or from making hiring, salary or similar financial decisions concerning such persons. The same principles apply to consensual romantic and/or sexual relationships, and require, at a minimum, that appropriate arrangements be made for objective decision-making with regard to the student, subordinate or prospective employee.

2. Abuse of Power Differential
Although conflict of interest issues can be resolved, in consensual and/or sexual relationships involving a power differential, the potential for serious consequences remains. Individuals entering into such relationships must recognize that:

- The reasons for entering such a relationship may be a function of the power differential;
- Where power differentials exist, even in a seemingly consensual relationship, there are limited after-the-fact defenses against charges of sexual harassment; and
- The individual with the power in the relationship will bear the burden of accountability.

Implementation:
To make it clear that romantic and/or sexual relationships involving conflict of interest are unacceptable at the UW-Platteville and to ensure that members of the university community are alerted to the potential for abuse in power differential relationships where conflict of interest issues are resolved:

- The above statement shall be published in the handbooks for Faculty, Academic Staff, and Student Senate; and
- Information about this statement will be incorporated into awareness programs held concerning the UW-Platteville Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures.