

## **Policy on Consensual Relationships between Employees and Students of the Connecticut State University System**

The University's educational mission is founded on an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect between all members of the academic community. Faculty members, as well as those individuals upon whom the University confers managerial, supervisory, or evaluative responsibilities, (including graduate assistants or undergraduate teaching assistants) carry a special responsibility to adhere to the highest ethical and professional standards and to avoid any actions that may appear to undermine this atmosphere of trust and respect and thereby hinder the University's educational mission.

Because of the inherent imbalance of power and need for trust, Codes of Ethics for most professional associations forbid professional-client sexual relationships. Similarly, faculty members, supervisory staff, and those with evaluative authority should be aware that dating or sexual relationships that might be appropriate in other circumstances have inherent dangers when they occur between a staff member and a student. Such relationships are susceptible to an appearance of exploitation and can impair the trust and integrity of the teaching, coaching, or other supervisory or evaluative relationship and may cause a perception of favoritism or bias on the part of the staff member. In addition, although these relationships may begin and remain consensual, they may easily be later characterized as non-consensual given the inherent power differential between the parties, and such relationships could potentially lead to sexual harassment charges.

Romantic, dating, or sexual relationships between an employee and a student over whom said employee exercises supervisory or evaluative authority is prohibited at the Connecticut State University.

In addition, Connecticut State University strongly discourages romantic, dating or sexual relationships between employees and students over whom said employee does not have supervisory or evaluative authority. Such relationships are not only susceptible to future conflicts of interest, but also may present the appearance of impropriety.