PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Faculty-student personal relationships are ethical insofar as they do not hinder the student’s academic progress or create a situation in which a student is favored on grounds other than academic performance. In teaching situations, faculty must avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Because romantic or sexual relationships between teacher and student are fraught with dangers of exploitation or favoritism, we avoid such relationships. For those same reasons, faculty members also avoid romantic relationships with any individuals over whom they have any academic, professional, or supervisory power.

The integrity of the faculty-student relationship is the foundation of the University's educational mission. This relationship vests considerable trust in the faculty member who, in turn, bears authority and accountability as mentor, advisor, educator and evaluator. The unequal institutional power inherent in this relationship heightens the vulnerability of the student and the potential for coercion. The professional relationship between faculty member and student must be protected from influences and activities that can interfere with discovery and learning consistent with the goals and ideals of the University.

Because romantic or sexual relationships between faculty member and student contradict these principles, we strongly discourage and avoid such relationships. Faculty-student personal relationships of any kind should not hinder the student’s academic progress or create a situation in which a student is advantaged or disadvantaged on grounds other than academic performance. Faculty must avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest.