

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE
POLICY ON CONSENSUAL ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

INTERIM

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Division Administration – Human Resources

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Purpose Consensual romantic or sexual relationships involving individuals with unequal power at The University of Alabama in Huntsville (“UAH” or “University”)—such as faculty-student, supervisor-employee, advisor-advisee, or coach-student—create risks of conflicts of interest, favoritism, coercion, and perceptions of exploitation.

This policy outlines limitations on consensual romantic or sexual relationships among faculty, staff and students in order to protect the integrity of the university academic and work environment.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, “**romantic and/or sexual relationships**” are defined as intimate, sexual, and/or any other type of amorous encounter or relationship, whether casual or serious, short-term or long-term, in-person or online or through other methods of communication.

“**Supervisory or evaluative authority**” is the power to control or influence another person’s employment, academic advancement, or extracurricular participation, including but not limited to, hiring, work conditions, compensation, promotion, discipline, admission, grades, assignments, supervision of dissertations, recommendations, financial support, or participation in extracurricular programs.

“**Student**” includes any individual currently enrolled as a student or seeking enrollment at the University or an affiliate, visiting students, and any student-employee or student-volunteer at the University.

Policy Employees (administrators, faculty, staff, or coaches) shall not engage in or solicit consensual romantic and/or sexual relationships with any student. Furthermore, no employee shall exercise any supervisory or evaluative authority over any student with whom that employee has previously been involved in a consensual romantic and/or sexual relationship.

Employees shall not engage in or solicit consensual romantic and/or sexual relationships with any employee over whom they exercise any supervisory or evaluative authority. Furthermore, no employee shall exercise any supervisory or

evaluative authority over any employee with whom that employee has previously been involved in a consensual romantic and/or sexual relationship.

It is the responsibility of the employee(s) who are or ever have been involved in such a consensual romantic and/or sexual relationship to disclose their relationship to the department chair, dean, and the University's Provost (faculty member), or the Office of Human Resources (coaches or staff) and begin taking steps necessary to ensure immediate compliance with this policy. The Office of Human Resources or the University's Provost will assist the employee and the appropriate parties to ensure compliance. Compliance may be achieved in a number of ways including, but not limited to:

- A. The voluntary transfer or reassignment of one party so the improper student/employee relationship no longer exists; or
- B. Excluding the employee from having any influence over the provisions of academic progress, aid, benefits, or services to the student;

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Potential violations of this policy should be promptly reported. Certain consensual romantic and/or sexual relationships may create an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest or conflict of commitment as defined in the University's Institutional Conflicts of Interest and Conflicts of Command Policy (06.09.05). When applicable, employees must make required disclosures under that policy in addition to complying with the notification and management requirements of this policy.

Any person, including but not limited to any third-party (e.g., co-worker), who believes a conflict of interest exists or that they may be or may have been disadvantaged by virtue of a consensual romantic and/or sexual relationship, or the prior solicitation or involvement of a consensual romantic and/or sexual relationship, may file a complaint with the Office of Risk Management and Compliance, the Office of Human Resources, the University's Title IX Office, and/or the Ethics Hotline.

Exceptions

Accommodations for pre-existing relationships between a faculty member or employee and a prospective student will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and, when possible, will lead to development of a management plan in consultation with the department chair, dean, and the Office of the Provost. Failure to comply with the required notification, removal of evaluative authority or management plan is a violation of this policy.

In certain unusual circumstances, faculty or staff and the relevant student may request a policy exception from the University's Provost (for faculty members) or the Chief Human Resources Officer (for staff members). Requests must be made by both parties in person, or if initially made by phone or in writing, with an in-

person follow-up. The University's Provost or its Chief Human Resources Officer will promptly review each such request, including by speaking individually with each party, consult with other University offices as necessary, and respond in writing to both parties as to whether the request can be granted.

Sanctions

If any faculty, staff, or student of UAH violates the terms of this policy, disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with relevant disciplinary procedures contained in the relevant handbooks, policies, procedures, practices, or contracts. Disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to, written warnings, loss of privileges, mandatory training or counseling, probation, suspension, demotion, exclusion, expulsion, and termination of employment, including revocation of tenure.

Review

The Office of Human Resources is responsible for the review of this policy every five years (or whenever circumstances require).