Central Connecticut State University  
Consensual Relationship Policy  

Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) stands for excellence in teaching and learning in an environment of inclusion, trust, and respect among all members of the university community. All employees with managerial, supervisory, or evaluative responsibilities for students or other employees 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, all employees with evaluative or supervisory authority over students and employees should be aware that dating or sexual relationships that might be appropriate in other circumstances have inherent dangers when they occur between employees, or between an employee and a student.

Consensual relationships can create real conflicts of interest and appearances of impropriety that can impair the integrity of academic and employment decisions. There are also special risks in any sexual or romantic relationships between individuals in inherently unequal positions of power, such as students and teachers or supervisors and employees. 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.

Policy

Prohibited

Between employee and student: Consensual romantic, dating, or sexual relationships between any employee and any student over whom that employee exercises direct or otherwise significant academic, supervisory, or evaluative authority or influence are prohibited at Central Connecticut State University. The evaluative relationship can take a variety of forms, such as teacher to student, advisor to advisee, coach to athlete, supervisor to student employee, or similar relationship.

Strongly Discouraged

Between employee and student: Romantic, dating or sexual relationships between employees and students over whom said employee does not have supervisory or evaluative authority are strongly discouraged. Such relationships are not only susceptible to future conflicts of interest, but also may present the appearance of impropriety.

If this situation exists, no employee should agree to supervise or evaluate a student with whom he or she has, or formerly had, a consensual relationship. A faculty member should inform the Dean if such a student wishes to enroll in a credit bearing course that he or she is teaching so that alternate arrangements can be made. Nor should a faculty member direct the student’s independent study, internship, or thesis; participate in decisions regarding grades; or write letters of recommendation or reference.

Between employee and employee: CCSU discourages employees with supervisory or evaluative authority from engaging in romantic, dating or sexual relationships with employees who they supervise or evaluate. If such a relationship exists or develops, the supervisory employee must
notify his/her manager so that arrangements can be made for the unbiased supervision and evaluation of the employee. These situations are handled on a case-by-case basis and may require transfer or reassignment of one or more employees.

**In the event of a Sexual Harassment Charge**

Anyone who enters into a romantic, dating or sexual relationship where a professional power differential exists must realize that if a charge of sexual harassment is subsequently filed, it may be difficult to defend the charge by claiming that there was mutual consent. Employees could be held personally liable in a criminal or civil lawsuit.

**Sanctions**

All violations of this policy should be reported to Human Resources for investigation and appropriate administrative action, up to and including disciplinary action.

Policy approved April, 2012