



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Subject: **Employment of Close Relatives—Nepotism**

Policy No. **8**

Pages: 4

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Approved by: Cheryl J. Norton, President, Southern Connecticut State University

Signature: _____

Connecticut State University System (CSUS) Policy Statement

It is well recognized that employment of relatives in the same area of an organization may produce conflicts of interest and problems concerning disparate treatment, which can damage the integrity of the System and its universities. Under the Code of Ethics, Connecticut General Statutes, Section 1-84(c), a state employee may not use his or her position for the financial gain of himself or herself, his or her spouse, child, child's spouse, parent, brother or sister. But the Code of Ethics only addresses limited circumstances where conflicts of interest may occur. Other relationships may also give rise to a claim of disparate treatment.

In addition, conferring of benefits and privileges based on relationship, rather than on merit, and the appearance that benefits and privileges may have been so conferred, can harm the functioning of the institution(s). In these circumstances, all parties leave themselves open to charges of inequitable consideration in decisions concerning work assignments, transfer opportunities, time-off privileges, training and development opportunities, performance evaluations, salary increases, promotions, demotions, and disciplinary actions.

It is the policy of the CSU that relatives of persons currently employed by CSU may be hired only if they will not be working under the supervision of a relative, either directly or indirectly, or supervising a relative.

If two existing employees of CSU work together in a supervisory relationship, and become related, as herein defined, a case-by-case review shall be made. In some circumstances, one of the employees may be transferred or otherwise reassigned. Existing employees should not ordinarily be transferred or reassigned into a supervisory relationship with a relative. Exceptions will only be made when there is a **Management Plan** approved by the Chancellor or the

President that is designed to eliminate the conflict of interest or the opportunity for favoritism.

In addition, the objective of the search procedures for new hires is to ensure that the best candidate for the position is the one selected. It is the policy of the CSU that any employee serving on a search committee must excuse themselves from consideration of the qualifications of a relative if one applies for the position and must further disclose to the search committee that said candidate is a relative. Further, no CSU employee shall vote, make recommendations or in any way attempt to participate in or influence decisions about any personnel matter which may affect the selection, appointment, evaluation, retention, tenure, compensation, promotion, termination, or other employment status or interest of a relative.

SCSU Policy Statement

It is the policy of Southern Connecticut State University to prevent conflicts of interest and appearances of favoritism that result from the appointment, reappointment, and/or supervision of an employee by a close relative.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Southern Connecticut State University.

Definitions

A **close relative** is an employee's spouse, same-sex partner, son and daughter (including stepchild), son-in-law and daughter-in-law, parents (including stepparents), father-in-law and mother-in-law, brother and sister (including stepbrother and stepsister), brother-in-law and sister-in-law, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchildren, great grandparent, and great grandchildren.

Supervision means the exercise of authority or responsibility with regard to appointment, reappointment, promotion, managing performance, work assignments, salary administration, termination or other terms and conditions of employment.

Obligations

> Avoidance of Nepotism

No University employee may approve, recommend, or otherwise take action with regard to the appointment, reappointment, promotion, salary or supervision of a close relative as defined by this policy. It should be clear that the reasons underlying such a restriction on employment, defined as applying to members of

the same family, should apply with equal validity to those whose living arrangements approximate family relationships.

> Disclosure Responsibility

Employees are required to fully disclose the existence of any relationship that may create a conflict of interest at the time of employment, or that develops at any time during employment.

Management Options for Avoiding Conflicts of Interest

> Limiting Applicant Pool

If an applicant for employment in a department is a close relative of another departmental employee and the hire of the applicant would place him or her under the supervision of a close relative, the head of the hiring unit may omit the applicant from those being considered for the available position.

> Alternative Supervision

- If an appointment, reappointment, or promotion of a person places him or her under the supervision of a close relative, all actions with regard to the terms and conditions of employment of the supervised employee, including the annual performance evaluation, shall be the responsibility of the next highest administrative supervisor.
- The performance evaluation must be in writing and submitted for review and approval to the Associate Vice President for Human Resources in the case of classified employees. In the case of faculty or administrative and professional employees, the performance evaluation shall be submitted for approval to the Provost.
- In cases where a waiver has been approved, an employee may be in a position to effect personnel actions (such as initial employment, retention, promotion, salary, work assignments, leaves of absence, etc.) affecting members of that employee's immediate and extended family. Prior authorization for these personnel actions must come from the employee's Human Resources Office.
- In cases where spouses or same-sex partners are employed in the same department or unit, neither may serve as judge nor advocate for the other.
- The conditions will also apply if two staff members become related through marriage after they have been employed by SCSU.

Miscellaneous

In unusual cases where the relative clearly demonstrates to have unique and unusual skills necessary for the position and these skills are not readily available in the labor market, a waiver may be requested. When such conditions exist, a

written request for a waiver must be submitted to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources and Labor Relations (or to his or her designee) for approval prior to making an employment offer.

Authority

- Conn. Gen. Statutes Title 1, Chapter 10 - §1-79 through 1-101
- Connecticut State University policy statement entitled “Hiring of Relatives”
- Connecticut State University System Board of Trustees Policy Book 1.15 “*Nepotism in Employment*” (BR #05-3)
- SCSU Employee Handbook

Exceptions

Any exception to the procedures in this Policy shall require prior written approval from the President of the University.