

CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIP

Consensual Relationships between Employees of CSUS

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, 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, 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 supervisor and employee. Such relationships are susceptible to an appearance of exploitation and can impair the trust and integrity of the employment relationship. Although these relationships may begin and remain consensual, they may easily be later characterized as non-consensual and could lead to sexual harassment charges.

Southern Connecticut State University strongly discourages romantic, dating, or sexual relationships between employees with supervisory or evaluative authority and the employees that they supervise or evaluate. If a romantic or sexual relationship exists or develops between such individuals, the employee with supervisory or evaluative authority is required to recuse him or herself from participating in any supervisory or evaluative decisions regarding said employee. If that is not practical, then the employee with supervisory or evaluative authority is required to consult with the first appropriate manager in the chain of command who is not in any bargaining unit. The manager shall make arrangements for the unbiased supervision and evaluation of the employee. A case-by-case review shall be made by the manager and, in some circumstances, an employee may be transferred or reassigned.

Consensual Relationships between Employees and Students of CSUS

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.

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

Because of the inherent imbalance of power and need for trust, Codes of Ethics for most professional associations forbid professional-client 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. 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 could lead to sexual harassment charges.

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