

SUBJECT: 400 Human Resources

Policy: 407.2 Relationships with Students

Effective: March 2010

Revised: December 2022

Reviewed:

Introduction and Purpose

Interactions between the faculty and students at Great Falls College Montana State University depend upon mutual trust, confidence, and professional ethics. An inherent power differential exists between faculty members and students. As a result, faculty-student interactions that go beyond a professional relationship carry risks of conflict of interest, breach of trust, abuse of power, and breach of professional ethics.

Policy

No faculty member shall engage in a romantic, sexual, or exploitive relationship with a student when that faculty member has a professional "position of authority" with respect to that student in such matters as teaching a course, or evaluating, supervising, or advising him or her as part of a school program. Should such a consensual relationship develop, or appear likely to develop while the faculty member is in a position of authority, the faculty member and/or the student shall take steps to dissolve the position of authority. Even when the faculty member has no professional responsibility for a student, he or she should be sensitive to the perceptions on the part of other students that a student engaged in a consensual relationship with a faculty member may receive preferential treatment from the faculty member and/or the faculty member's colleagues.

Failure to comply with this policy will subject the faculty member to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

This policy also applies to other College employees who have a supervisory or advisory responsibility in relation to students.

There are exceptional circumstances in which a student at the College is a spouse, partner or other individual with a previously established close person tie to a faculty member or other employee with a supervisory/advisory responsibility. This policy does not apply in such circumstances, but the circumstance should be disclosed to the CEO/Dean as soon as the employee is aware of the close relation's enrollment. The CEO/Dean is the administrative officer who determines whether an exceptional circumstance exists and, if so, the extent to which it governs employee conduct.