



424 POLICY – Consensual Relationships

424.1 Statement of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to clearly define the College’s expectations for faculty and staff (“employees”) with respect to ethical behavior and professional boundaries in situations where employees have direct management, supervisory, teaching, evaluative, and/or advisory responsibilities over students or other employees. Redlands views consensual romantic, intimate or sexual relationships between Faculty/Student, Staff/Student and Staff/Subordinate as potential conflicts of interest and/or violations of professional ethics. Relationships of this nature have inherent risks, including the potential to undermine the integrity of Redlands’ educational and employment decisions, create real or apparent conflicts of interest, increase the risk of exploitation for students and employees, and have the potential to result in legal liability for both Redlands and the individuals involved. Integrity can be compromised when employees are in a position to evaluate the academic performance of students or the work performance of other employees with whom they are having or have had a consensual relationship. The interest in the consensual relationship can impair the judgment required for the sound exercise of institutional responsibility or authority.

Consensual relationships to which this policy applies are those consensual romantic, intimate or sexual relationships where an employee has institutional responsibility for or authority over the other employee or student, or is involved with the other employee or student in some other supervisory, managerial, teaching, evaluative or advisory capacity.

Sexual harassment is distinguishable from situations covered by this Policy in that sexual harassment always involves conduct that is unwelcome, is a clear abuse of authority, or produces defined negative effects on individuals.

The President, at his or her discretion, may make an exception to the prohibition of Faculty/Student or Staff/Subordinate relationships in the case of a pre-existing relationship, but only where the class at issue is a required class in the student’s program, the class is not available with another instructor, and steps are taken to ensure objectivity of evaluation.

424.2 Definitions

Consensual Faculty/Student Relationship: The term “Consensual Relationship” in the Faculty/Student context means a consensual romantic, intimate or sexual relationship between a faculty member and a student, whether full-time or part-time, who is enrolled in a credit or non-credit course taught by the faculty member, or who is in a formal advising relationship with or whose academic work is evaluated by the faculty



member, or whose employment is supervised the faculty member. It is considered a serious breach of professional ethics for a faculty member to initiate or acquiesce in a romantic, intimate or sexual relationship with a student who is enrolled in a course being taught by the faculty member, or whose academic work is being supervised, counseled or advised upon by the faculty member.

Consensual Staff/Student Relationship: The term “Consensual Relationship” in the Staff/Student context means a consensual voluntary romantic and/or sexual relationship with a student where the staff member exercises official authority or control over the student. This includes but is not limited to supervisory relationships over student-employees, student/advisor relationships in student organizations, college teams, etc.

Consensual Staff/Subordinate Relationship: The term “Consensual Relationship” in the Staff/Subordinate context means a consensual voluntary romantic and/or sexual relationship between an employee and another employee over whom he or she has managerial, supervisory, evaluative or other decision-making authority. There is potential for abuse of power in a consensual relationship between a staff member and someone whom he or she has supervisory authority. Another potential problem involves perceptions of third parties who feel they have lost equality in terms of assignments, promotions, etc., and who may feel that the only way to succeed is to engage in a romantic, intimate, and/or sexual liaison.

Adopted September 2014



424 PROCEDURE – Consensual Relationships

424.1:1 Faculty/Student Relationships:

The standard of professional ethics at Redlands Community College prohibits Consensual Faculty/Student Relationships (as defined in Policy 424.2 above).

424.1:2 Staff/Student Relationships:

The standard of professional ethics at Redlands Community College prohibits Consensual Staff/Student Relationships (as defined in Policy 424.2 above).

424.1:3 Staff/Subordinate Relationships:

The standard of professional ethics at Redlands Community College prohibits Consensual Staff/Subordinate Relationships (as defined in Policy 424.2 above).

424.1:3 Discipline:

Employees who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action as defined under Policy 414.4 Causes for Termination, Suspension and Demotion.

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