

Policy Prohibiting Consensual Relationships between Faculty and Students

The relationship between faculty and students is central to the academic mission of Boston College. The academic, mentoring, and socialization experiences fostered by University programs of study should be characterized by mutual respect and courtesy and operate in a manner that facilitates the education of students. Inappropriate non-academic or personal ties can damage the integrity of academic relationships, distorting judgments or appearing to do so in the minds of others. For these reasons and the potential for abuse, the University prohibits any faculty member or graduate student instructor from engaging in a consensual romantic or sexual relationship with a student over whom he or she exercises academic or professional authority.

Any romantic or sexual relationship between a faculty member and a student is prohibited as long as the supervisory relationship continues. Further, a faculty member is prohibited from exercising academic or professional authority over any student with whom he or she has previously had a consensual romantic or sexual relationship. This prohibition encompasses consensual romantic or sexual relations between a graduate student and an undergraduate when the graduate student has teaching or supervisory responsibility for the undergraduate, and those between department chairs and students in their departments, graduate program directors and graduate students in their departments, and all academic advisors and supervisors and their students.

If a faculty member or academic supervisor violates this policy by engaging in consensual romantic or sexual relations with a student, he or she must immediately recuse himself or herself from any evaluative or supervisory activities affecting the student, extending until such time as the student ceases to be in an academic program in the University. The faculty member is also obligated promptly to alert his or her chair, dean or department head as to the existence of the relationship so that alternate instructional and supervisory arrangements can be made to protect the student from potential abuse.

The Provost, Deans, Department Chairs, and other administrators should respond to reports of prohibited romantic or sexual relations by inquiring further and initiating appropriate measures, taking care to protect the rights to privacy and due process of all parties.

This policy is intended to supplement the University policy on sexual harassment. In addition, although this policy prohibits consensual sexual relations only between a teacher/supervisor and that individual's student, the University strongly discourages any sexual relations between members of the faculty or administration and undergraduates.