



Washington and Lee University

Consensual Relationship Policy

Approved By: Provost June Aprille and Steve
McAllister, Vice President for Finance / Treasurer

History: Issued – April 2, 2008
Revised – _____

Related Policies: [University Policy on Prohibited
Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation; University
Policy on Employment of Relatives \(Nepotism\)](#)

Responsible Office: Provost and Human Resources

I. INTRODUCTION

Policy Statement

Washington and Lee University encourages the development of collegial and professional relationships among all members of the University community and is committed to a learning and work environment of civility and respect. Romantic and/or sexual attention, interaction, or relationships between certain categories of individuals at the University undermine the fundamental educational purpose of the institution and disrupt the workplace and learning environment.

The faculty-student relationship is one of trust in the institution and the faculty member, who has the professional responsibility for being a mentor, educator, and evaluator. Faculty-student and employee-student romantic and/or sexual attention, interaction, or relationships, even mutually-consenting ones, interfere with a student's unfettered pursuit of learning and the integrity of the academic and workplace environment.

The intent of this policy is to promote the treatment of each member of the University community with dignity and respect. W&L has no intent to intrude in the personal lives of its employees except to the extent that they may negatively affect other community members and the mission of the institution.

Applicability

This policy applies to all faculty, administrators, and staff employees of Washington and Lee University. Nothing in this policy replaces the University policies on prohibited discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, the University Nepotism policy, or other University policies that may be triggered by conduct or relationships covered by this policy.

II. DEFINITIONS

Consensual Relationship – a romantic and/or sexual relationship to which both parties have given their consent.

Employee – as used in this policy, the term employee includes all who are employed by the University, including but not limited to all categories of: faculty, administrators, and staff, and those persons who are under contract or assignment by the University.

Student – as used in this policy, and except where otherwise noted, refers to currently-enrolled undergraduate and law students at the University.

III. POLICY

Faculty/Student and Employee/Student Consensual Relationships

Consensual relationships (defined above as a romantic and/or sexual relationship to which both parties have given their consent) between University employees and undergraduate students are prohibited.

Consensual relationships between law students and all employees within the law school are prohibited.

Consensual relationships between law students and non-law school university employees who have the potential to directly impact the student's academic or professional status or development currently or in the future are prohibited.

Consensual relationships between law students and university employees who believe they are exempted by the preceding sentence are strongly discouraged. Such employees who nevertheless choose to engage in a consensual relationship with a law student may not be defended or indemnified by the University if difficulties in the relationship arise (including, but not limited to, student claims of sexual harassment against the University or employee).

Questions about this policy and its application **should be directed to the Provost for faculty, or to the Executive Director of Human Resources for other employees or those under contract or assignment by W&L.**

IV. ANNOTATED REVISION HISTORY

There are no revisions to this policy.
