

PLU's Policy Regarding Certain Consensual Sexual Relationships

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Primary responsibility for maintaining high standards of conduct resides with faculty and supervisors, since they exercise significant authority and power over others.

A ***consensual sexual relationship*** between an employee (faculty or staff,) and a student, or between a supervisor and a subordinate employee, does not necessarily involve sexual harassment or sexual misconduct. In such circumstances, however, the University's responsibilities to its students and employees are potentially compromised by the likelihood or even the appearance of a conflict of interest. Consequently, this policy strictly prohibits consensual sexual relationships between an employee and a student whenever the employee is in a position of professional responsibility with respect to the student. This policy also strictly prohibits consensual sexual relationships between a supervisor and a direct subordinate employee.

For the purposes of this policy, an employee is in a position of professional responsibility with respect to a student when the employee is currently in a position to make or influence a decision or to confer or withhold a benefit relating to the student's education, employment, or campus-sponsored activity. This includes, but is not limited to, staff/student, faculty/student, coach/player, supervisor/student worker, and adviser/advisee relationships.

For the purposes of this policy, an employee is in a direct subordinate relationship with a supervisor if the employee reports to the supervisor, if the supervisor evaluates or directs the employee's work, or if the supervisor is in the direct chain of command of the person to whom the employee reports.

The University strongly discourages consensual sexual relationships such as those between an employee and an adult student (even in the absence of a current professional responsibility with respect to the student) and between a faculty member or supervisor and an employee in a position of less authority (even in the absence of a direct reporting relationship as defined above). While this policy does not prohibit consensual sexual relationships such as these, they are strongly discouraged.