



Board Policy

Chapter 3 – General Institution

BP 3445 – CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIPS

The San Diego Community College District is committed to maintaining learning and work environments as free as possible from conflicts of interest, exploitation, and favoritism.

Where a party uses a position of authority to induce another person to enter into a non-consensual relationship, or to remain in a relationship after consent is withdrawn, the harm both to that person and to the District is clear. Even where the relationship is consensual, there is significant potential for harm when there is a power difference between the parties involved, as is the case, for example, between supervisor and employee or instructor and student. Such relationships may cast doubt on the objectivity of any supervision and evaluation provided.

This policy is intended to protect both employees and students from harassment, coercion, favoritism, retaliation, or the appearance of those conditions. The employee- student and the employee-employee relationships are critical to the mission of the District and the welfare of employees and students. This policy is adopted in order to prevent employees and students from placing themselves in situations that create a risk of real or perceived distortion of their professional relationships.

Employee-Employee Consensual Relationships

No employee should participate in the supervision, hiring committees, evaluation, or decisions pertaining to promotion, for someone employed at SDCCD with whom that person has or has had a consensual relationship.

Employees should be aware that entering into such a relationship with a supervisor creates the potential for risk to both parties. In particular, such a relationship will limit that supervisor's ability to direct work or promote that employee's career.

In the event that a personal relationship of this kind does exist in a supervisory context, the supervisor must disclose the relationship to the appropriate superior and initiate arrangements to address any issues of conflict of interest. If the supervisor is able to act immediately on their own to discontinue or prevent the prohibited participation and if the supervisor's action does not require the knowledge of the relationship by or approval of another District employee in order to effectively discontinue or prevent the prohibited participation, then disclosure of the relationship is not required.

Employee-Student Consensual Relationships

No employee should enter into a consensual relationship with a student actually under that employee's authority. The fact that an individual is an employee of the District does not in and of itself mean that the employee has authority over every student enrolled in the District. Situations of authority include, but are not limited to, teaching, counseling, recommending employment of a student for an hourly work experience or other non-academic position, exercising substantial

responsibility for grades, honors, or degrees; and considering disciplinary action involving the student.

The employee should discourage the student with whom they have had a consensual relationship from enrolling in a course which the employee is teaching, or seeking other District-related services from the employee. The employee also should not recommend employment of the student in an hourly position, participate in decisions pertaining to a student's grades, honors, and degrees; or consider disciplinary action involving the student. If the student is enrolled or seeks to enroll in a class the employee is teaching, or if the student seeks or continues to seek other District-related services from the employee or within their area of responsibility or authority, the employee must promptly notify their immediate supervisor.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms “employee,” “supervisor,” “student,” and “consensual relationships” are defined as follows:

Employee: anyone employed by SDCCD as faculty or staff of any type and in any capacity, full-time or part-time.

Supervisor: anyone who oversees, directs or evaluates the work of others, including, but not limited to managers, supervisors, department chairs.

Student: any person enrolled full-time or part-time in any District program.

Consensual relationships: any freely and mutually agreed to dating, romantic, or sexual relationship between individuals.

Note: Non-consensual situations are covered under BP 3430 – Prohibition of Harassment, and BP 3433 - Prohibition of Sexual Harassment Under Title IX, as well as all Administrative Procedures that implement those policies.

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