

UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Policy on Dual/Consensual Relationships

Introduction:

When Dual/Consensual romantic or sexual relationships occur between university students and faculty members (including graduate student TA/GA/RAs), between staff and faculty members, and between faculty members, there is a potential for conflict or interest and abuse/exploitation because of power differentials.

Unwanted sexual behavior, of course, even if a person consents to it, is sexual harassment. Courts have determined that someone who feels threatened and therefore unwillingly submits to sexual behaviors does not lose the right to bring charges of sexual harassment.

Faculty-Student Relationships:

1) Within the Instructional Context. Under no circumstances should a faculty member become romantically or sexually involved with a student while that student is enrolled in his or her classes. This is imperative not only for the welfare of the student in question, but also to protect the interests of other students in the class. At no time should a faculty member become sexually or romantically involved with an undergraduate in the same subfield.

2) Outside the Instructional Context. Sexual relationships between faculty members and Anthropology graduate students or students outside the department that occur outside the instructional context may lead to difficulties. Particularly when the faculty member and student are in the same subfield or department, relationships that the parties view as consensual may appear to others to be exploitative. Further, in such situations, the faculty member may face serious conflicts of interest and must be careful to distance himself or herself from any decisions that may reward or penalize the student involved. A faculty member will be deemed to have violated his or her ethical obligation to the student, to other students, to colleagues, and to the university if he or she fails to withdraw from participation in activities or decisions that may reward or penalize a student with whom the faculty member maintains or has had an amorous relationship.

Any faculty member who becomes romantically involved with a graduate student outside of the instructional context must take all necessary steps to protect the student from any possible prejudicial consequences for his or her professional future. The faculty member must inform the department chair and colleagues in his/her subfield that he/she has a conflict of interest. Further action shall include but not be limited to the following:

- 1) resigning from any supervising committees (dissertation, advisory) affecting the student;
- 2) refraining from writing letters of recommendation for the student (for grants, fellowships, jobs, and so forth);
- 3) generally removing him- or herself from any position of authority over or responsibility for that student's professional and scholarly career, inside or outside the University, at any time in the present or future;
- 4) generally avoiding all discussions involving comparative evaluations of students in the faculty member's subfield with respect to money and awards.

Faculty-Staff Relationships:

If a faculty member and a staff member are involved in a dual/consensual relationship, the faculty member should avoid being in a position of supervising the staff member's work or participating in any decisions concerning the distribution of resources to the staff. The Department Chair should be notified.

Faculty-Faculty Relationships:

If two faculty members are involved in a dual relationship, they should notify the Department Chair. Each should avoid participating in both personnel actions, especially promotion and tenure, involving the other and any departmental decision-making concerning the allocation of resources to faculty. This implies that one of the two faculty members could serve as Department Chair only under specific and negotiated circumstances.

Approved by Faculty May 12,1997