

Policy On Sexual Harassment

(Adopted by the Senate of the University at Albany on May 5, 1986, University Senate Bill No. 8586-17.)

The very nature of the relationship between faculty and students includes an element of power held by faculty. Faculty are expected to acknowledge that fact and to respond professionally. Given the diverse nature of today's University community, faculty also should be sensitive to a variety of issues, including but not limited to: sexism, racism, disability, amorous preference, ageism, life-style, and political or religious beliefs. At the same time, faculty are not expected to be all things to all people. Members of the faculty should have a general knowledge of campus resources available to them, their colleagues and their students, and then should willingly take advantage of those resources when they are needed.

1. University policy, as enunciated in President Swygert's letter of August 5, 1993, to the University community, prohibits sexual harassment in all aspects of campus life. This policy is incorporated by reference into this document.
2. Relationships of an amorous nature that might be appropriate in other circumstances may be problematic and may be unethical when they occur between a faculty member and a student for whom a professional responsibility exists. Such relationships may undermine the trust on which the educational process depends. Relationships of an amorous nature between faculty and students, even when they occur outside the instructional context, also may be problematic and may be unethical when there is the possibility that the faculty member unexpectedly may be placed in a position of professional responsibility for the student.
3. Further, family relationships and relationships of a sexual nature between a faculty member and a student for whom an instructional responsibility exists can present a conflict of interests in violation of the New York Public Officers Law. The parties to such relationships are urged to avoid direct teacher-student interaction. In every such case the faculty member must arrange to be disengaged from the responsibility of grading, evaluating, or approving the work of the student. Family relationships and relationships of an amorous nature between members of the University community can present a conflict of interests in violation of the New York Public Officers Law whenever one party has any position of power over, or professional responsibility for, the other. One party may not officially approve or recommend (or vote on such approval or recommendation) the appointment, reappointment, promotion, or salary adjustment of the other; nor may the one party evaluate the performance of the other.