

Romantic and Sexual Relationships Between Students and Staff

The following resolution was adopted by the Faculty Council of Representatives on November 8, 1995, and approved by the president and provost as Cornell University policy on September 18, 1996:

The relationships between students and their teachers, advisors, coaches, and others holding positions of authority over them should be conducted in a manner that avoids potential conflicts of interest, exploitation, or personal bias. Given the inherent power differential, the possibility of intentional or unintentional abuse of that power should always be borne in mind. For example, a conflict of interest arises when an individual evaluates the work or performance of a person with whom he or she is engaged in a romantic or sexual relationship.

Romantic or sexual relationships between students and persons in positions of authority compromise the relationship between students and the university. No member of the university community should simultaneously be romantically or sexually involved with a student whom he or she teaches, advises, coaches, or supervises in any way. Individuals in such positions of authority must not allow these relationships to develop or continue.

In unusual circumstances the supervising dean* of the person in a position of authority may grant an exemption from this policy when full severance of the university relationship would create undue academic or financial hardship for the student.

*The supervising dean shall mean the dean of the school or college of the staff member's primary appointment, the dean of the Graduate School in the case of graduate students, the vice provost for research for staff members holding appointments in centers, and the vice president for student and academic services for staff members holding appointments in that division.