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**POLICY TITLE:** Consensual Romantic Relationships Involving Students

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**POLICY PURPOSE:** Fort Hays State University promotes an atmosphere of professionalism based on mutual trust and respect. The integrity of interaction among faculty, staff and students must not be compromised. When a University employee is in a position of direct supervisory or evaluative authority over a student, and the employee and student are also involved in a consensual romantic relationship, there is a potential for a conflict of interest, favoritism or exploitation. Moreover, such relationships may lead to restricted opportunities, or the perception thereof, for others in the academic environment. In addition, when such relationships decline or end, there is an increased potential for various complaints.

Consensual romantic relationships involving employees in the same household or family members are governed by the University's Nepotism Policy in the Faculty and Unclassified Staff Handbook, Chapter 1. The University's Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Violence, Domestic and Dating Violence, and Stalking governs any conduct involving nonconsensual, unwelcome sexual conduct by an individual in either the academic or employment environment, and any other conduct constituting discrimination, harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, as those terms are defined in that policy

**BACKGROUND:**

**APPLIES TO:** Faculty, staff and students

**DEFINITIONS:** "Consensual romantic relationships" – means mutually understood consensual romantic or sexual relationships between individuals.

"Direct evaluative or supervisory authority" - When one participant in a consensual romantic relationship is personally involved in directly evaluating, grading, or otherwise assessing the other participant's academic performance, or making decisions that materially affect the participant's advancement in an academic program or participation in a University-sponsored program or activity.

**CONTENTS:**

**POLICY STATEMENT:** To protect the integrity of the University academic environment, consensual romantic relationships between employees and students are prohibited when the employee has direct evaluative or supervisory authority over the student.

In such instance when a relationship exists contrary to this policy, the employee shall immediately disclose the relationship to the employee's supervisor or department/unit head. The employee shall cooperate with the supervisor, in conjunction with department/unit head as necessary, to sever the evaluative or supervisory relationship and eliminate the existing or potential conflict of interest. A violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary action as appropriate, up to and including termination of employment.

Individuals who believe in good faith that this policy has been violated should report the violation to the employee's supervisor or other appropriate University official.

**EXCLUSIONS OR  
SPECIAL  
CIRCUMSTANCES:**

**RELATED  
DOCUMENTS:**

**Policies:**

Kansas Board of Regents Policy and Procedures Manual, Chapter IIC.2.b.v.

**Forms:**

**Other:**

**KEYWORDS:**

Consensual, relationship, discrimination, supervisory, favoritism

**RESPONSIBLE  
OFFICE:**

Human Resources

**RESPONSIBLE  
UNIVERSITY  
OFFICIAL:**

Director of Human Resources

**ORIGINATION DATE:** 8/2019

**CHANGE HISTORY:** Adopted by President's Cabinet 8/28/2019