

CCS Administrative Procedure

2.00.01-L Non-Fraternization and Consensual Relationships

Implementing Board Policy [2.00.01](#)

Contact: Chief Human Resources Officer, 434-5037

1.0 Purpose

Community Colleges of Spokane (CCS), aware of its obligations as an institution of higher education and steward of the public trust, will ensure personnel administration procedures and practices are based upon sound human resource management principles and promote a work environment of collegiality, respect, and professionalism.

CCS is committed to providing an environment conducive to individual development and learning. The district recognizes that at times the relationships between an employee and a student or a supervisor and subordinate may result in a conflict of interest. Circumstances contributing to the conflict of interest may include a sexual/romantic relationship between an employee and student or a supervisor and subordinate.

2.0 Limitations and Requirements

- 2.1 All employees of CCS accept responsibility to avoid conflict of interest between their professional responsibilities and their personal relationships with students or those whom they supervise, evaluate, or oversee in extracurricular activities.
- 2.2 Sexual relationships between an employee and a student or a supervisor and a subordinate, may pose risks to the employee, student, supervisor, subordinate, third parties and department morale. A sexual relationship between an employee and a student or a supervisor and subordinate can lead to a complaint of sexual harassment if the student or subordinate perceives they were exploited. Student complaints will follow the CCS Administrative Procedure [3.30.01 B](#) Title IX Grievance Procedures for Students and employee complaints will follow CCS Administrative Procedure [2.30.01 D](#) Title IX Procedures for Employees for incidents which occur prior to August 1, 2024 and CCS Administrative Procedure 2.30.01 F for incidents which occur after August 1 2024.
- 2.3 In addition, other employees or students may express concern about undue access or advantage, favoritism, restricted opportunities or unfavorable treatment as a result of the relationship. To ensure that the advising, mentoring, evaluation and supervision of students or subordinates are conducted fairly, employees are prohibited from entering into a sexual relationship with students or subordinates with whom they have a current supervisory relationship.
 - 2.3.1 For the purpose of this procedure, the term 'current' is defined as within the last two quarters and/or a reasonable anticipation that a supervisory role may exist in the next quarter.
- 2.4 This procedure does not apply to sexual relationships that are prohibited by law under [Chapter 9A.44 RCW](#) or relationships that violate discrimination or sexual harassment laws and policies. Complaints will follow CCS Administrative Procedures as noted in Section 2.2 of this procedure.
- 2.5 Some professionals employed by the district (e.g., counselors, nurses, childcare workers and others) may have different, more stringent professional standards that must be met for continued licensure and/or certification. This does not preclude or replace any guidelines published by a particular professional organization. CCS expects its employees to abide by the guidelines of any professional organization to which they are members in addition to the standards set forth in this procedure.

Definitions

The following definitions are specific to the terms of this procedure and do not modify or revise similar terms as used in related procedures or collective bargaining agreements.

- 2.6 Consensual relationship: any voluntary romantic, dating, or sexual relationship between individuals.
- 2.7 Emotional intimacy: a deeply personal relationship perpetuated by the supervisor, that is not physical but may or may not include conversations or messages of a sexual nature.
- 2.8 Hostile work environment: Hostile, disrespectful, or abusive speech and/or conduct that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intolerable environment in the opinion of a reasonable person.
- 2.9 Non-consensual relationship: any romantic, dating, or sexual relationship between individuals that at any time is not agreed to by one of more of the people involved.
- 2.10 Romantic/sexual relationship: An intimate, interpersonal relationship that involves physical or emotional intimacy.
- 2.11 Supervisory responsibility: any role perceived as a position of power or authority to include, but not limited to instruction, academic or club advising, coaching, service on tenure committees, oversight of internship, assignment of grades, evaluation, or effective ability to recommend in an institutional capacity for employment, scholarships, rewards, or awards. Supervisory responsibility may occur on or off campus, in curricular, co-curricular or extra-curricular activities.

3.0 Declaration and Mitigation Process

- 3.1 To ensure the instruction, advising, mentoring, evaluation and supervision of students or subordinates is conducted fairly, employees involved in romantic or sexual relationships with students or subordinates must report the relationship to the appropriate supervisor or dean with the intent to seek options to mitigate the potential conflict of interest.
- 3.2 This prohibition does not apply to marriage, registered domestic partners, and relationships that pre-dated either or both person's affiliation with the district.
- 3.3 The employee and supervisor/dean will develop a written plan that will describe the steps taken to ensure that there is no longer an actual, apparent or perceptible impropriety. The written plan must be approved by the Human Resources Office.

4.0 Violations

- 4.1 In the event the relationship is determined to be non-consensual, discriminatory, prohibited by law or a conflict of interest exists, an investigation will be conducted by the Human Resources Office.
- 4.2 The action taken will be proportional to the severity of the offense as determined by the totality of the circumstances of the incident (the nature, frequency, intensity, location, context, method of discovery and duration of the alleged behavior), the college's policies and procedures, student handbook and/or applicable collective bargaining agreements.

5.0 Retaliation

- 5.1 No employee or student shall suffer penalty or retaliation (including actions that may dissuade a reasonable person from reporting) for reporting a relationship. Retaliation against any person for bringing forward a concern or participating in the investigation of a complaint under this process, including creating a hostile work environment, forms independent grounds for taking appropriate disciplinary action.

6.0 Malicious and Frivolous Allegations

- 6.1 CCS will discipline members of the district who knowingly make false or frivolous allegations of prohibited employee/student or supervisor/subordinate relationships. No complaint will be considered malicious or frivolous solely because it cannot be corroborated.

7.0 Related Information

- 7.1 CCS Administrative Procedure [2.00.01](#) Personnel Administration
- 7.2 CCS Administrative Procedure [3.30.01 B](#) Title IX Grievance Procedures for Students
- 7.3 CCS Administrative Procedure [2.30.01 D](#) Title IX Procedures for Employees
- 7.4 [Chapter 9A-44 RCW](#) Sex Offenses

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