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About this capture

Romantic Relationship Advisory

Columbia University's educational mission is promoted by the professionalism in its faculty-student and staff-student relationships. Faculty and staff are cautioned that consensual romantic relationships with student members of the University community, while not expressly prohibited, can prove problematic. While some relationships may begin and remain harmonious, they are susceptible of being characterized as non-consensual and even coercive. This sometimes occurs when such a relationship ends, and is exacerbated by the inherent power differential between the parties.

A faculty or staff member involved in a consensual relationship with a student is expected to remove him/herself from academic or professional decisions concerning the student. This expectation arises because the relationship may impair, or may be perceived as impairing, a faculty or staff member's ability to make objective judgements about that student.

The Provost has authorized some departments to adopt more restrictive policies, given the special nature of the relationship between their students and faculty or staff. Individuals are, therefore, encouraged to contact their department head if they have any questions about whether a more restrictive policy applies to them. Departments that wish to establish more restrictive policies should contact Zenobia White-Farrell before implementation.

Should a romantic relationship with a student lead to a charge of sexual harassment against a faculty or staff member, the University is obligated to investigate and resolve the charge in accordance with its Sexual Harassment Policy and applicable grievance procedure.

Questions regarding this Advisory Statement may be directed to Zenobia White-Farrell, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 402 Low Memorial Library, 535 West 116th Street, New York, NY 10027 (212) 854-5511.

October 2000



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