

POLICY TYPE: Human Resources

POLICY TITLE: Consensual Relationships

Responsible Administrator: Vice President of Human Resources

Location of Related Procedures: Office of Vice President of Human Resources

Consensual amorous or sexual relationships between a supervisor and an employee or between faculty and students at Madison Area Technical College (“Madison College”) may result in claims of sexual harassment, even when both parties appear to have consented to the relationship. The power differential inherent in such relationships may compromise the subordinate’s free choice. When those in authority abuse or appear to abuse their power in a relationship, trust and respect in the Madison College community are diminished. Moreover, others who believe they are treated or evaluated unfairly because of such a relationship may make claims of harassment.

Therefore, it is a violation of this policy if faculty members become involved in amorous or sexual relationships with students who are enrolled in their classes or subject to their supervision, even when both parties appear to have consented to the relationship. No faculty, staff, or teaching assistant shall become involved in an amorous relationship, consensual or otherwise, with a student for whom that person currently has any teaching responsibility, including counseling and advising, coaching, or supervision. In all cases in which an amorous or sexual relationship exists or develops, it is the obligation of the faculty member, staff member, or teaching assistant whose college position carries the presumption of greater power to disclose the relationship immediately to the appropriate supervisor who will contact Human Resources for assistance in avoiding an appearance of impropriety and a potential conflict of interest.

Additionally, it is a violation of this policy for a supervisor and a directly reporting employee to have a consensual amorous or sexual relationship with each other. In cases in which a consensual sexual or amorous relationship exists or develops between a supervisor and a directly reporting employee, it is the obligation of the supervisor to disclose the relationship immediately to his or her supervisor, who will contact Human Resources for assistance in how to avoid an appearance of impropriety and a potential conflict of interest.