



*The*  
**UNIVERSITY**  
*of* **VERMONT**

Policy V. 5.1.2

Responsible Official: Director of Athletics

Effective Date: December 11, 2008

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## **Amorous Relationships – Department of Athletics**

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### **Policy Statement**

It is the policy of Department of Athletics that amorous and/or sexual relationships ("amorous relationships") between coaches or athletic staff and student-athletes or student employees is prohibited, and that violation of this Policy shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

### **Reason for the Policy**

This policy works to provide a safe and healthy environment for student-athletes and student-employees, and to protect and preserve the reputation and integrity of the University and its Athletic Department.

### **Applicability of the Policy**

This Policy applies to coaches, athletic staff, student-athletes, and student-employees, as defined by this Policy.

### **Policy Elaboration**

An ethical and legal responsibility of trust is borne by every relationship between coaches or athletic staff and student-athletes or student employees. This responsibility includes the duty to provide a safe and healthy environment for all student-athletes and student employees, and to serve as role models for young persons. As a result, no amorous relationship – regardless of the perception of consent by one or both participants -- can exist without significant conflicts of interest. In fact, conflicts of interest are intrinsic to amorous relationships between coaches or athletic staff and student-athletes or student employees.

Student-athlete and student employees' respect for and trust in coaches and athletic staff greatly restrict their freedom to reject amorous or sexual advances. The power of coaches and athletic

staff to give or withhold benefits further limits the extent to which an amorous or sexual relationship between coaches or athletic staff and student-athletes or student employees can be considered consensual.

Even when the coach or athletic staff member has no direct professional responsibility for a student-athlete or student employee, other student-athletes or student employees may perceive that a student-athlete or student employee who has an amorous relationship with a coach or athletic staff member may receive preferential treatment from the coach or staff member or the coach or staff member's colleagues.

Consequently, the participation of a coaching or athletic staff member in an amorous relationship with a student-athlete or student employee is strictly prohibited. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

## Definitions

*Athletic Staff:* Any person serving in an administrative, management, or support capacity within the Department of Athletics, or any capacity in which they supervise student employees or student-athletes, or have responsibility for the provision of substantive services or other benefits to student employees or student-athletes.

*Coach:* Any person serving as a head coach, assistant coach, graduate assistant coach, coaching intern, or volunteer coach

*Student-Athlete:* Any University of Vermont student who is a member of a varsity team, as defined by University and NCAA regulations.

*Student Employee:* Any University of Vermont student who is employed in any capacity by the Department of Athletics, including but not limited to Intercollegiate Athletics, Campus Recreation, Basic Instruction Program, Athletic Communications, or facilities/maintenance.

## Procedures

*New coaches and athletic staff members shall be notified of this Policy* in connection with their orientation. This Policy will also be in the Department Policy and Procedures Manual and the Student-Athlete Handbook and will be available on-line as part of the University Policy compendium.

*A person who wishes to file a complaint alleging a violation of the Policy* should promptly contact the Senior Associate Director of Athletics, who will immediately initiate an investigation of the complaint with the assistance from the Office of Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity. The Director of Athletics, or his/her designee, may also upon receipt of allegations of Policy violation, initiate an investigation in cooperation with the Office of Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity. Such investigations shall include interviews with any coaching or athletic staff member accused of Policy violations, at which time they will be given an opportunity to respond to pending allegations.

If investigation demonstrates that a Policy violation has occurred, the coach or staff member will be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal.

## **Contacts**

Questions related to the daily operational interpretation of this policy should be directed to:  
Director of Athletics 656-3075

The Director of Athletics is the University official responsible for administration and interpretation of this Policy.

## **Related Documents/Policies**

Amorous Relationships with Students

[http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/general\\_html/student\\_relation.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/general_html/student_relation.pdf)

Sexual Harassment & Misconduct

[http://www.uvm.edu/policies/general\\_html/sexharass.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/policies/general_html/sexharass.pdf)

## **Effective Date**

Approved by the President on December 11, 2008