



FACULTY SENATE

Student Affairs Committee

Minutes

April 1, 2021

8:30-10:00

Microsoft Teams

Present Kenneth Allen (CNHS), Chris Burns (Faculty Senate President), Sin Yee Chan (CAS), Terry Delaney (CALs), Jonathan Flyer (LCOM), Steve Gove (GSB), Denise Hersey (LIB), William Louisos (CEMS), Jennifer Prue (CESS), Kris Stepenuck (RSENR), Berke Tinaz (GSA), Sarah Twitchell (LCOM)

Absent Troy Kane (SGA), Scott Van Keuren (CAS)

Guests Veronika Carter, J. Dickinson, Richard Single

Co-Chair Jennifer Prue called the meeting to order at 8:30 am via Microsoft Teams.

1. Minutes. The minutes of the March 2021 meeting were approved as written.

2. Amorous Relationship Policy.

Professional Boundaries with Students

Policy Statement

The University's mission is best advanced through adherence by faculty and staff to the highest standards of professionalism in the discharge of their duties. Toward this end, and to foster the trust and mutual respect essential to a productive learning environment, faculty and staff must assiduously avoid the appearance or actuality of abuse of power and conflicts of interest in their interactions with students.

In most cases, social interaction between faculty or staff and students supplemental to formal instruction benefits the academic community by promoting the interchange of ideas, building mutual trust and respect, and facilitating communication. Trust and respect are, however,

diminished when those in positions of authority abuse that authority or place themselves in a situation of actual or perceived conflict of interest.

All employees are expected to maintain appropriate professional boundaries in their relationship with all students. Relationships with students must maintain a central focus on student learning and development.

A demonstrated failure to abide by this Policy will result in the initiation of disciplinary action against the employee engaged in the relationship.

Reason for the Policy

This policy establishes a professional standard applicable to relationships involving students, in support of the University's commitment to ethical behaviors, academic fairness, community values, and an environment free from sexual misconduct. The policy seeks to prevent potential harm to students, conflicts of interest, damage to academic integrity, and damage to the reputation of the University, its faculty, staff, and students.

Applicability of the Policy

This Policy applies to all employees and to all students, as defined below.

Definitions

An amorous relationship: is a romantic, sexual or dating relationship. This definition excludes marital or civil union relationships.

Professional boundaries: are appropriate professional, moral, and ethical relationships with students that have a central focus on student learning and development in keeping with the University mission.

Employees: Employees include all tenure and non-tenure-track, full-time and part-time faculty, instructors, adjuncts, as well as any visiting/volunteer faculty. Employees also includes all coaches. Coaches include any person serving as a head coach, assistant coach, graduate assistant coach, coaching intern, or volunteer coach. Employees also includes all staff members and any volunteer staff.

Employees with influence or authority over other academic experiences/requirements of graduate students: Include any faculty or staff member, whether paid or volunteer, with the ability to Impact student academic/career success, responsibility for making academic decisions or recommendations, who perform instructional, evaluative, administrative or supervisory, tutoring, advocacy, counseling and/or advising duties, whether within or outside the classroom with respect to a student. Such responsibilities include the administration, provision, or supervision of all academic, co-curricular or extra-curricular services and

activities, opportunities, awards or benefits offered by or through the University or its personnel in their official capacity.

Students:

includes all students currently enrolled at the University of Vermont, whether part-time or full-time, in undergraduate or graduate education, including the Larner College of Medicine, in credit-bearing courses or programs and in non-degree/credit bearing courses or programs (including continuing and distance education). Students from other Institutions who are participating In UVM sanctioned or sponsored non-credit activities and also covered. Former students of the University of Vermont, are not covered by this policy if not enrolled at UVM. Individuals who are primarily employees of the University but who are also taking courses are not considered Students under this policy.

Procedures

What Is Prohibited?

Employees are prohibited from engaging in an amorous relationship with any undergraduate student, regardless of the perception of consent by both participants. Employees also are prohibited from soliciting any undergraduate student to engage in an amorous relationship or encouraging solicitation from an undergraduate student to engage in an amorous relationship. This prohibition includes solicitation via social media or via a website or other means if is known, or should be known, that the target of the solicitation is an undergraduate student.

Employees are prohibited from engaging in an amorous relationship with a graduate student in the same department and/or graduate program. Employees are prohibited from engaging in an amorous relationship with a graduate student if the employee has influence or authority over other academic experiences/requirements of the graduate student. This policy prohibits solicitation by an employee of a graduate student if the policy would prohibit an amorous relationship with that graduate student.

The University also prohibits amorous relationships between a graduate student (such as a graduate teaching or research assistant) and an undergraduate student if the graduate student has educational responsibility over the undergraduate student.

An amorous relationship in violation of these prohibitions would have a high potential (i) to create a conflict of interest because of inherent power differentials between employees and students; (ii) to jeopardize the centrality of focus on student learning and development; and (lii) to create indisputable risks to students, employees, and the broader University community. Such relationships are counterproductive to the educational process and thus would constitute unprofessional conduct.

Best Practices for Maintaining Professional Boundaries with Students

When interacting with students, faculty and covered staff members must use good judgment and maintain professional boundaries that are consistent with the legal and ethical duty of care University personnel have for students. The following is a non-exhaustive list of conduct that should be avoided in order to maintain professional boundaries with students. These are not strict prohibitions and common sense should dictate what is appropriate under particular circumstances.

- Showing personal attention or friendship to particular student(s) beyond the professional faculty/staff-student relationship, such as disclosing intimate details of your private life, or encouraging students to confide information about their personal problems or relationships (outside of legitimate guidance/counseling meetings).
- Socializing where students are consuming alcohol, drugs or tobacco or spending time with students socially outside of University-sponsored events.
- Using personalized terms of endearment (pet names) with students, or otherwise addressing them in an overly familiar manner.
- Communicating with students for non-educational purposes via social networking websites or apps (Instagram, Facebook, etc.) or via e-mail or phone.
- Engaging in conduct that gives the appearance of impropriety, or creates an actual impropriety, such as being alone with an individual student out of the view of others (i.e., car ride in your vehicle in a non-emergency situation; inviting an individual student to visit your home).

Exceptions

This policy does not prohibit amorous relationships that existed prior to **[Insert the date of the restatement of this policy]** and that were not in violation of the University's prior version of the Amorous Relationships policy.

This policy does not prohibit amorous relationships with students where the University has determined that there is no realistic possibility of conflict of interest or abuse of authority. Such decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the disclosure protocol below.

Disclosure Protocol

If, notwithstanding the Policy prohibition, a faculty or covered staff member becomes involved in, or intends to become involved in, an amorous relationship with a student, s/he must promptly inform the Provost. The Provost, or the Provost's designee, will make a determination over whether there is any realistic possibility of conflict of interest or abuse of authority, or whether any further action is necessary to address conflicts and mitigate potential risks. Such voluntary report does not relieve the faculty or staff member from the initiation of disciplinary action for the Policy violation, but it may be taken into account as a mitigating factor in the imposition of any associated sanctions.

Confidentiality

Disclosed employee-student amorous relationships will be kept private except to the extent necessary to ensure that conflicts of interest and misconduct are avoided.

Sources for confidential consultation that can assist those who may seek guidance but wish to maintain confidentiality include: [\[List e.g. counseling services and medical professionals\].](#)

Complaint Procedure

A report of violation of this Policy may be filed by any member of the University community with the University's Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity ("AAEO") office at 802-656-3368 or via e-mail at TitleIX@uvm.edu or via the online ["Bias, Discrimination, & Harassment Incident Reporting Form."](#)

A report of a violation of this Policy by a coach or Athletics staff may also be filed by any member of the University community with the Associate Director of Athletics/Senior Women's Administrator or to the Director of Athletics.

AAEO complaint resolution procedures will apply, where applicable.

Potential Discipline

A demonstrated violation of this Policy will result in the initiation of disciplinary action consistent with the standards and procedures of applicable policies or collective bargaining agreements. In appropriate instances, reports made under this Policy may also be investigated for possible violations of law or policy relative to sexual harassment and/or sexual misconduct.

Contacts

Questions concerning the daily operational interpretation of this policy should be directed to the following (in accordance with the policy elaboration and procedures):	
Title(s)/Department(s):	Contact Information:
Executive Director Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity	(802) 656-2909

Forms/Flowcharts/Diagrams

None

Related Documents/Policies

- [Amorous Relationships - Department of Athletics Policy](#)
- [Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment Policy](#)
- [Sexual Harassment & Misconduct Policy](#)

Regulatory References/Citations

None

Training/Education

Training will be provided on an as-needed basis as determined by the Approval Authority or the Responsible Official.

About this Policy

Responsible Official:	Provost and Senior Vice President	Approval Authority:	President
Policy Number:	V. 2.4.3	Effective Date:	June 30, 2017
Revision History:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• V. 3.0.3.1 effective December 5, 2004• V. 2.4.2/V. 3.0.3.2 effective October 14, 2008		

Signature

Accepted:

Patricia Prelock
Provost and Senior Vice President

Date

Approved:

Suresh V. Garimella
President

Date

3. Late Withdraw Rule.

Proposed resolution:

For the Spring 2021 semester, the Student Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate supports the Student Services Collaborative in their work with UVM students by granting additional flexibility in the reasons and specific documentation required to grant a late withdrawal request for a student. Students will need to follow regular late withdrawal procedures by requesting a late withdrawal from their Dean's office. The Dean's office will gather more information about the student's situation and will determine whether extenuating circumstances related to COVID-19 played a significant role in the

student's ability to progress in the course or courses for which a withdraw is requested. Decisions will be made on a case by case basis and all emails and other documentation related to the process will be kept to support records of all approved W requests. This flexibility is for Spring 2021 semester only.

Motion: Terry Delaney moved to vote to accept the Late Withdraw resolution. The motion was seconded by Kris Stepunec.

Vote: 12 approve, 0 oppose, 0 abstain. **The motion carried.**

4. Change of Walk Policy.

Modification of Walk Policy for 2021 Commencement

Reason for request:

Commencement for undergraduate and graduate students (but not medical students) will take place May 20 and 21; grades are not due until noon on May 21. Therefore, it is not the case that units can certify that graduates have met the walk policy requirements prior to commencement this year.

Current policy:

Eligibility to Walk

Undergraduate students who have completed all degree requirements are eligible to walk in the UVM and college/school commencement ceremonies. In addition, undergraduate students who are within six credits of completing all degree requirements and have a plan to complete all remaining requirements may, with the approval of their dean's office, walk in the UVM and college/school commencement ceremonies.

Graduate students will not be permitted to participate in commencement ceremonies until they have completed all their degree requirements, passed their defense examination, and submitted the final copy of their thesis or dissertation to the Graduate College.

Proposed temporary change for 2021 Commencement:

WHEREAS: 2021 Commencement ceremonies will take place before colleges/schools can certify that graduating students have completed the degree requirements needed to walk in commencement as specified in the UVM Eligibility to Walk Policy,

THEREFORE: Students who are enrolled in coursework that, if they were to successfully complete all of that coursework, would make them eligible to walk under the UVM Walk Policy may walk in the 2021 commencement ceremony. This applies to both graduate and undergraduate students. For graduate

students completing a thesis or dissertation, the final copy of the document must be successfully submitted to the Graduate College to be eligible to walk.

Motion: Terry Delaney moved to vote to accept the Walk Policy resolution. The motion was seconded.

Vote: 12 approve, 0 oppose, 0 abstain. **The motion carried.**

5. CEMS-CHEGG Cheating Situation. Richard discussed some of the issues that have been discussed by the Pedagogical Innovation Committee in CEMS. These issues include increased cheating in courses. With the online platforms there are a whole new facilitation of cheating that is occurring. There are sites that allow students to post or buy exams and other materials. Currently posting these items is not a violation of the current code of academic integrity. The best solution to reduce the amount these sites are being used for cheating is best done by reworking the current code of academic integrity. This is an ongoing issue and the faculty would like more work done on this topic. The SAC would like to look at the process at handling issues of academic integrity and enforcement.

6. Old Business – none at this time.

7. New Business.

- The nomination period for SAC Chair / Co-Chair is open. If you are interested in that position let the Faculty Senate Office know by tomorrow at 5pm. A ballot will go out after that.
- Technology locking down in the middle of student exams.

The SAC was adjourned at 10:00am. The next meeting of the SAC will be on May 6, 2021 at 8:30am on Microsoft Teams.