

**CHAPTER 2: Administration and General Institution
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE NO. 2.25.2 (AP 3430)**

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE
San Mateo County Community College District**

Subject: AP 2.25.2 Improper Romantic or Sexual Relationships
Adoption Date: xx/xx
References:

The District is committed to a learning environment that fosters respect, integrity, professional behavior, and fair and impartial treatment of students and staff. Consensual sexual or mutually recognized romantic or dating relationships pose an apparent or actual conflict of interest if one of the parties in the relationship has responsibility for supervising, evaluating, directing, or overseeing the other, or has the power to directly influence the other person's educational or employment status.

Such relationships can involve an abuse of power, unfair treatment, compromised judgment, or impaired objectivity that can affect both the parties to the relationship and the general District community. These relationships have the potential to harm both the parties involved and others, and can disrupt teaching and working relationships through the apparent or real unequal favor or advantage they confer. The conflict of interest these relationships pose can undermine both the integrity of the supervisory or evaluative relationship and the District's commitment to a positive educational/employment environment.

1. Any employee who enters into or is in a consensual sexual or mutually recognized romantic or dating relationship with another person whom they supervise, evaluate, or have oversight responsibilities for, must immediately remove themselves from any supervisory or evaluative function over the other party in the relationship. Failure to comply with this step will be grounds for discipline up to and including dismissal. Employees must also consult with their manager to document that appropriate steps have been taken. Where possible, the District will work with the employees to assist in removing the potential conflict of interest through transferring or altering the supervisory or evaluative relationship.
2. The District recognizes that a consensual relationship may exist that pre-dates any supervisory assignment. In these cases, individuals shall not accept supervisory, oversight, or evaluative responsibilities over someone with whom they have a sexual or mutually recognized romantic or dating relationship, unless effective documented steps have been taken to eliminate any conflict of interest.
3. No faculty member should initiate or acquiesce to a sexual or mutually recognized romantic or dating relationship with a student who is enrolled, or who will be enrolled, in a course being taught by the faculty member or whose academic work is supervised or evaluated by the faculty member. If these situations arise, faculty/staff members must take steps to remove themselves from any academic or professional decision making or evaluation concerning the student. If the faculty member cannot remove him/herself from academic or professional decision making or evaluation of the student, then the faculty member must consult with his/her manager, and document that appropriate steps have been taken to be in compliance with this policy.

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4. Similarly, employees who have supervisory, oversight, or advising relationships with students should never initiate or acquiesce in a sexual or romantic relationship with the student. If these relationships occur, the staff member must immediately remove him or herself from the supervisory, evaluative or advisory relationship, and notify his/her respective manager so these steps can be approved and documented.
5. All employees are cautioned that conflicts of interest and/or abuses of power can occur even when both parties have consented to the relationship. Circumstances may change, and behavior that was defined as consensual and welcome may later come to be found as unwelcome. Faculty and staff should be particularly aware of their professional obligations towards students, since power differentials present in these relationships make the student's apparent consent in the relationship suspect. If these relationships exist, the person in the position of greater authority or power will bear the primary burden of accountability in ensuring that the relationship is consensual, and that he or she exercises no supervisory or evaluative function over the other person in the relationship.
6. Staff or students who experience unwelcome sexual or romantic relationships are referred to the District's Policy 2.25, [Prohibition of Harassment](#).