

POLICY 2.46: CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Sandburg is committed to fostering an educational and work environment that is respectful, promotes equal opportunity and promotes the development of all members of the college community. As part of this commitment to a respectful learning and work environment, it's crucial for those in positions of authority not to abuse, or appear to abuse, the power entrusted to them. Given the uneven balance of power within relationships covered under this policy and to avoid real or perceived potential conflicts of interest, appearances of bias, favoritism, intimidation or coercion, improper use of authority or exploitation, this policy prohibits certain personal relationships.

This policy prohibits employees from pursuing or engaging in romantic or consensual sexual relationships with students. This policy also prohibits romantic or consensual sexual relationships where there is an inherently unequal position between employees, including supervision, direction or influence.

- **Relationships with students:** Employees or volunteers of the college cannot have or pursue a personal, intimate relationship (e.g., romantic, sexual, etc.) with any student to whom the employee or volunteer stands in a position of supervision, direction or influence, regardless of whether the student is under direct or indirect supervision, being advised, coached or instructed in the classroom, or otherwise supported in college programs and activities by the employee or volunteer.

Employees and volunteers are expected to report any such conflicts to their direct supervisor and Human Resources. If the relationship pre-exists the current employee/volunteer/student relationship, the employee or volunteer must inform their direct supervisor and Human Resources at the time of employment or acceptance of a student into a college program or activity. In cases where the employee's or volunteer's relationship with the student could pose a potential risk for violation of this policy the college will take action to address the employee's/volunteer's role toward the student in the educational environment. In situations that involve a potential violation of this policy, further action may be taken to address the employee's/volunteer's status with the college, including disciplinary action for employees and removal or non-assignment for volunteers.

- **Relationships between employees:** Employees cannot have or pursue a romantic or sexual relationship with any other employee over whom they have authority, or for whom they are responsible for hiring, promoting, disciplining, evaluating, directing or otherwise supervising, directly or indirectly. Employees are expected to report any such conflicts to their direct supervisor and Human Resources. If the relationship pre-exists the current employment relationship, both employees must inform their direct

supervisors and Human Resources. The individuals may not remain in a professional supervisory relationship, or report directly or indirectly, interview or hire, evaluate, promote, discipline or make recommendations on the other's conditions of employment.

It may be problematic for individuals in a relationship to work in the same department or unit but may be acceptable under some circumstances. The direct supervisor, in consultation with the appropriate vice president and Human Resources, will evaluate situations on a case-by-case basis. Some outcomes may include the removal of a reporting relationship or to separate individuals by reassignment if possible.

If two employees engage in a romantic or sexual relationship but neither is a subordinate of the other as outlined above, they should be mindful of their professional duties and be responsible for assuring that their relationship does not produce problems regarding favoritism, bias, ethics, job performance or conflict of interest.

This policy on consensual relationships applies to all Sandburg employees, and is applicable regardless of the marital status, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression of the parties involved in the relationship.

Any individual who becomes aware of conduct prohibited by this policy should report it to Human Resources.

This policy does not limit employee or student rights to address unwelcome conduct under the college's policy against discrimination in the workplace or policy prohibiting sex discrimination in education under Title IX.

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