

# CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIP STATEMENT

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Portland Community College's mission is to offer an atmosphere that encourages the full realization of each individual's potential. This mission is promoted by professionalism in the relationships that faculty and staff have with students. These relationships are intended to foster free and open exchange of ideas, productive learning, and the work that supports it.

In addition, those who supervise or evaluate the work of students must be perceived to be making their decisions fairly and without favoritism. This mission is potentially jeopardized when faculty/staff enter into consensual romantic relationships with their students.

Faculty and staff are cautioned that consensual romantic relationships with their students can prove to be unwise and problematic, and should be avoided. When consensual romantic relationships occur, questions of fairness, favoritism, and coercion arise:

- Relationships in which one party is in a position to review the work, or influence the career of the other may provide grounds for complaint when that relationship appears to give undue access or advantage, restricts opportunities, or creates a hostile and unacceptable environment for others.
- Such relationships may undermine the real or perceived integrity of the supervision provided, and the particular trust inherent in the student-faculty relationship.
- Such relationships may, moreover, be less consensual than the individual whose position confers power believes. The relationship is likely to be perceived in different ways by each of the parties to it, especially in retrospect. While some relationships may begin and remain harmonious, they are susceptible to being characterized as unprofessional and disrespectful to others.

Therefore, faculty/staff should not engage in consensual romantic relationships with their current students.

If a faculty or staff member has a pre-existing consensual romantic/sexual relationship with a student, the student should be discouraged from enrolling in courses taught by the instructor or entering into work situations in which she/he would be supervised by the staff member. If the student does enroll in the course or work for the staff member, the faculty/staff member should remove him/herself from academic or professional decisions concerning the student.

Should a romantic/sexual relationship between a faculty/staff member and his/her student lead to a sexual harassment charge, the College is obligated to investigate and resolve the charge in accordance with the complaint procedure in the Gender Based and Sexual Misconduct Policy.