

University of St. Thomas Policies

FACULTY-STUDENT ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Policy Number: F.07.05

Scope: All faculty

Purpose: The University of St. Thomas is committed to fostering a learning, working, and living environment that promotes the personal and professional growth of students and faculty and honors the dignity of every member of our community. Central to the life of the Academy are the professionalism and integrity of its faculty. It is the responsibility of the faculty to refrain from violating the dignity, trust and rights of those whom they serve. Truth and respect, indispensable to the well-being of the University, are violated when faculty engage in romantic or sexual relationships, with students, even if those relationships are consensual.

POLICY

1. Definitions

For purposes of this policy:

“Student” is any individual who is currently registered or enrolled in a credit bearing course or an academic program of the University.

“Faculty” shall mean persons employed by the University with accountability and responsibility, in collaboration with their University colleagues, for aspects of the University’s academic programs. Faculty, informed by the University’s mission and character, contribute to forming the curriculum, subject matter, methods of instruction, faculty status, and those aspects of student life related to the academic process.

2. Policy

In keeping with its commitment to provide equal opportunity to all individuals, and in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest, favoritism, exploitation, harassment or breaches of professional standards, the University prohibits romantic or sexual relationships where there is an inherently unequal position between the parties including supervision, direction or influence. Consistent with the purpose of this policy, graduate research and teaching assistants shall not engage in romantic or sexual relationships with students they instruct, evaluate, assign or advise.

a. Students

No faculty, graduate research assistant or teaching assistant shall pursue, have or maintain a romantic or sexual relationship with any student.

Exception: If such a relationship existed prior to the relationship between the parties at the University, both the involved faculty member and involved student shall report such relationship to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and/or Human Resources within five (5) days of both parties being enrolled or employed.

b. Consent

University of St. Thomas Policies

In all such circumstances, consent by the parties may not be considered a defense against a charge of fraternization in any proceeding conducted under this policy.

c. Reporting and Review

Any faculty member, graduate research assistant or teaching assistant who becomes aware of or involved in such a relationship prohibited by this policy has the obligation to report such relationship to the Vice President for Academic Affairs or Human Resources within five (5) days.

d. Enforcement

Employees who violate this policy may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

The University utilizes a “preponderance of the evidence” standard (more likely than not that a policy violation occurred) in the determination of whether this policy has been violated.

e. Retaliation

It is unlawful to take adverse actions against any member of the University of St. Thomas community for filing a complaint of violations of this policy, or for cooperating in an investigation of such a complaint. The University will not tolerate retaliation or discrimination against anyone who makes a good faith report of a suspected violation of law, regulation or University policy.

APPROVED: Board of Directors

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