

Statement on Romantic or Sexual Relationships Between Students and Knox College Employees

Romantic or sexual relations between persons of unequal power, authority, or influence at the College, are inherently problematic because they include the potential for a conflict of interest, favoritism, and exploitation. Maintaining appropriate boundaries in relationships can be especially difficult in a community like ours where informal, supportive relations among faculty, staff, and students outside the classroom are not only permitted but encouraged.

Because the difference in institutional power and the inherent risk of coercion are so great, the College has determined that with limited exceptions, no faculty or staff member shall enter into a romantic, dating, or sexual relationship with a currently enrolled Knox College student.

Exceptions to this Policy fall into two categories:

Pre-existing Relationships.

Preexisting relationships between an employee and student must be disclosed by the employee to a supervisor or appropriate College official. Accommodations for preexisting relationships between a student and a faculty or staff member will be considered by the College on a case-by-case basis, and, when necessary, will lead to development of a management plan in consultation with the supervisor or chair of the relevant office, department or program and an appropriate College official. Such a management plan might, for instance, include alternate supervisory or evaluation mechanisms. For faculty, the appropriate College official will be the Dean of the College; for staff members, the Associate Vice President for Human Resources. Failure to comply with the required notification, removal of evaluative authority or management plan shall be considered a violation of this Policy.

Student Workers.

This Policy does not prohibit student workers from engaging in romantic, dating or sexual relationships with other Knox College students over whom they do not exercise supervisory or evaluative authority. However, some student workers, such as teaching assistants or resident advisors, do hold supervisory or evaluative roles over other students. These student workers must notify their supervisors before engaging in any romantic, dating or sexual relationships with students over whom they exercise supervisory or evaluative roles. These cases will be considered by the College on a case-by-case basis and, if appropriate, may lead to development of a management plan in consultation with the Faculty Handbook 2021-22 82 supervisor or chair of the relevant office, department or program and an appropriate College official. Such a management plan might, for instance, include alternate supervisory or evaluation mechanisms. Failure to comply with the required notification, removal of evaluative or supervisory authority or management plan shall be considered a violation of this Policy.

Romantic, dating or sexual relationships between faculty or staff members and Knox students, whether formal or informal, whether within or outside the institution context, that are not covered by the two

exceptions above will be considered misconduct, and may constitute a form of sexual harassment governed by the [Policy Against Title IX Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct \(PDF\)](#).

As noted above, failure to comply with the required notification, removal of supervisory or evaluative authority or management plan is also considered a violation of this Policy. If any faculty, staff, or student worker of Knox College is found to be in violation of this Policy, disciplinary action will be taken on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with appropriate disciplinary procedures contained in relevant handbooks, policies, procedures, practices, or contracts. Disciplinary actions may include but are not limited to written warnings, loss of privileges, mandatory training or counseling, probation, suspension, demotion, and termination of employment, including revocation of tenure.