

SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE

CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIP POLICY

(EMPLOYEES / STUDENTS)

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this Consensual Relationship Policy (the “Policy”) is to identify the Springfield College (the “College”) policy as it relates to consensual relationships (as defined below) between employees and students of the College.

II. Scope:

This Policy applies to all employees of the College. The term “employee” for purposes of this Policy includes all who are employed by the College, including but not limited to, all categories of administrators, faculty and staff, except as noted below. It also includes College volunteers, individuals who are under contract with the College such as independent contractors, consultants or temporary staff, and individuals employed by host sites for student clinical and field work, practicums and internships.

For purposes of this Policy, “employee” does not include a College student who is also employed by the College as part of a work study or similar program. Such shall be deemed “students” for purposes of this Policy.

In addition, “employee” does not include individuals receiving a Graduate Fellowship or Graduate Assistantship, which includes Resident Directors (such shall also be deemed “students” for purposes of this Policy), but this Policy does impose limitations on those individuals as it relates to Consensual Relationships, as noted below.

III. Defined Terms:

- A. Consensual Relationship. A “Consensual Relationship” is an interaction between an employee and student for a romantic and/or sexual relationship, including, but not limited to, dating, pursuing dates, and relationships of a physical or sexual nature.

IV. College Policy:

The College is committed to maintaining an environment where the education of students is of the greatest importance. Dating, romantic, or sexual relationships between College employees and students, even if consensual, can negatively interfere with the student’s pursuit of learning and the educational environment and the integrity of the College. Power differentials, real or perceived, can diminish a student’s ability to give meaningful consent to such a relationship. An employee’s ability to provide College services without partiality is suspect when the employee and the student have a Consensual Relationship. Even when the employee and student act with

integrity, others may perceive bias, partiality, or influence. Furthermore, the dissolution of these relationships can create discord and significantly impair the normal operations of the College.

For these reasons, Consensual Relationships between students and employees, including relationships that occur when College is not in session or students are on leave, are prohibited.

Pre-Existing Relationships: On occasion, an employee will have a Consensual Relationship, including being married, with an individual who then becomes a student, or an individual with a pre-existing Consensual Relationship with an existing student will become an employee. It is the obligation of the employee to disclose that Consensual Relationship to the Office of Human Resources. It is the responsibility of the Director of Human Resources, in consultation with applicable academic and/or administrative leadership personnel, to take the steps they deem necessary to ensure that the educational experience of the student, and other students at the College, is not materially affected by the Consensual Relationship. Since individual cases may vary, the Director of Human Resources and applicable academic and/or administrative leadership have discretion to consider specific circumstances—the nature of the relationship, the specifics of the student’s academic program, the employee’s duties, and constraints on the College—in fashioning these steps. The steps can range from no action, to the recusal of the employee from matters involving the student, to changes in the employee’s duties.

Employees who violate this Policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Graduate Fellowship and Graduate Assistantship: Students filling Graduate Fellowship and Graduate Assistantships have unique roles at the College. While they are primarily students, many of the Fellowships and Assistantships involve positions of teaching and/or oversight over other students. In that regard, the following policy provisions apply to students holding a position of a Graduate Fellowship or Graduate Assistantship:

- Consensual Relationships with undergraduate students are prohibited.
- Consensual Relationships with other graduate students are prohibited if the Graduate Fellow or Graduate Assistant has a direct academic or other professional responsibility over the other graduate student. Examples of prohibited Consensual Relationships include, but are not limited to, those between: i) a Graduate Fellow and a graduate student in his/her course; and, ii) a Graduate Assistant and a graduate student that he/she supervises.

In the event of any pre-existing relationships between a Graduate Fellow or Graduate Assistant and a student that would be prohibited hereunder (e.g. two Springfield College undergraduate students are in a Consensual Relationship, one of those students graduates and accepts a position as a Graduate Fellow and the other student remains an undergraduate) the procedure outlined above regarding pre-existing relationships for employees and students shall be followed.

Graduate Fellows and Assistants who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of their Fellowship/Assistantship.

V. Responsible Parties/Contacts:

Questions regarding this Policy or complaints of violations should be directed to the Office of Human Resources.

VI. Related Policies and References:

Nothing in this Policy replaces other College policies such as Conflict of Interest and Discrimination/Harassment that may be triggered by conduct or relationships covered by this Policy.

Approved by:	President & President's Cabinet
Date Adopted:	January 12, 2016
Date Effective:	April 15, 2016