UNIVERSITY OF DENVER	UNIVERSITY OF DENVER POLICY MANUAL CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIPS	
Responsible Department: Human Resources and Inclusive Community **Recommended By:** Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor, VC for People and Culture, Chief Risk and Compliance Officer, AVC for Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity **Approved By:** Chancellor	**Policy Number** HRIC 3.10.070	**Effective Date** ___/__/2026

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The University of Denver is committed to maintaining a healthy work and academic environment for all members of the campus community.

B. Even if consensual, dating, romantic, or sexual relationships between full-time and part-time faculty, University staff, student workers, part-time and temporary employees, professional research staff, and post- doctoral fellows and their subordinates ("Employee" as further defined below) or between Employees and Students (as defined below) can negatively affect the educational and/or work environment.

C. When individuals involved in a consensual relationship are in positions of supervisory or evaluative authority at the University, there is the potential for a conflict of interest, favoritism, and exploitation. This Policy prohibits undisclosed consensual relationships where individuals have supervisory or evaluative authority.

D. Moreover, the legal, administrative, and ethical concerns expressed in this Policy apply with particular force to dating, romantic, or sexual relationships between: (i) faculty and undergraduate Students, and (ii) coaches and undergraduate Students or graduate Student-athletes, irrespective of whether there is a reporting relationship. This Policy prohibits such relationships.

II. POLICY OVERVIEW

A. University Employees are prohibited from engaging in dating, romantic, or sexual relationships with individuals over whom the Employee has Direct Authority (as defined below) or has significant influence or decision-making with regard to grades, financial aid, immigration status, promotion, tenure, appointment, or other educational or professional opportunities.

B. Relationships between Employees

No Employee shall engage in a dating, romantic or sexual relationship with another Employee over whom they have Direct Authority. Conversely, no Employee shall exercise Direct Authority over any other Employee with whom they have, or previously had, a dating, romantic or sexual relationship. If such a situation preexists or arises, it will not be considered a violation of this Policy if the Employee in the position of greater authority promptly recuses themselves from any role with Direct Authority over the other Employee, and discloses the relationship to their Chair, Dean, other appropriate supervisor, or Human Resources and Inclusive Community (HRIC). If the supervisory individual or individuals to whom the disclosure is made determines that a simple recusal will eliminate the conflict of interest (e.g., recusing oneself from a single tenure committee decision), no further action is required. In all other cases, where simple recusal will not eliminate the conflict of interest (e.g., if one Employee would be supervising the other on an ongoing basis, or routinely making evaluative decisions affecting the other), the Employee in the position of greater authority must promptly follow the Disclosure and Conflict Management process set forth in the Procedures below, so that any potential conflicts and risks can be managed.

C. Relationships between an Employee (Faculty and Staff) and a Student over whom the Employee has Direct Authority

1. No Employee shall engage in a sexual or romantic relationship with a Student over whom that Employee has Direct Authority.

2. No faculty member shall engage in a sexual or romantic relationship with a graduate Student when:

- The faculty member has Direct Authority over the graduate Student; or
- The graduate Student is enrolled in any academic program (e.g., J.D. or MBA program) or department in which the faculty member performs an academic, financial, evaluative, counseling, supervisory, or formal mentoring role.

3. Conversely, no Employee (including faculty member(s)) shall exercise Direct Authority over a Student with whom the Employee currently has, or previously had, a dating, romantic or sexual relationship.

4. Additionally, no Student serving in a teaching or evaluative role for a specific course (e.g., as a teaching assistant or teaching associate) shall engage in a dating, romantic or sexual relationship with any Student then-enrolled in that course. Conversely, no Student serving in a teaching or evaluative role for a specific course shall exercise academic authority over any Student in

that course with whom they currently have, or previously had, a dating, romantic or sexual relationship.

D. Relationships between Faculty and Undergraduate Students and Coaches and Students

The legal, administrative, and ethical concerns expressed in this Policy apply with particular force to dating, romantic, or sexual relationships between: (i) faculty and undergraduate Students, and (ii) coaches and Students. Because of the heightened risk of a real or perceived power imbalance between faculty and undergraduate Students, and coaches and Students:

1. No faculty member shall engage in a dating, romantic, or sexual relationship with any Student currently enrolled as an undergraduate regardless of whether the faculty member exercises academic or other authority over that Student; and

2. No coach shall engage in a dating, romantic, or sexual relationship with any undergraduate Student or graduate Student-athlete regardless of whether the coach exercises authority over that Student.

HRIC, after consultation with the relevant Chair or Dean, may permit exceptions to this section of the Policy regarding undergraduate Students in limited appropriate circumstances (e.g., a non-traditional undergraduate Student who takes no classes in the same department as the faculty member).

E. Recusal and Disclosure and Conflict Management

If any of the situations in Section II.A through II.C preexist or arise, the party in the position of greater authority must promptly recuse themselves from any role with Direct Authority over the other party and follow the Disclosure and Conflict Management process set forth in the Procedures below, so that any potential conflicts and risks can be managed. This recusal and conflict management process cannot be used to permit situations prohibited in Section II.D.

III. PROCESS OVERVIEW

A. Disclosure and Conflict Management

1. As set forth above, this Policy requires that in certain situations, individuals must promptly disclose relationships so that any potential conflicts can be managed. Specifically, in these situations, the party in the position of greater authority must notify (a) the appropriate Dean and the Provost if the relationship involves a faculty member; (b) the appropriate officer of the unit and the Vice Chancellor of Human Resources if the relationship involves a staff member; and (c) to the appropriate officer of the unit and

the Office of Student Employment if the relationship involves a student worker. While either party may report the consensual relationship, the individual who has the supervisory or evaluative authority is obligated to report the relationship.

2. For disclosures involving a staff member or student worker, HRIC, or HRIC in consultation with the appropriate supervisor, will determine how to eliminate or minimize the potential conflict of interest and disruption of the academic or work environment. Where appropriate, this may include development of a written conflict management plan, a copy of which shall be retained by HRIC. In the event that HRIC or either party to the relationship disagrees with the proposed conflict management plan, the relevant Vice Chancellor may review, and shall have final authority to amend or approve, the plan.

3. For disclosures involving a faculty member, the Provost (or their designee) in consultation with the appropriate Dean, will determine how to eliminate or minimize the potential conflict of interest and disruption of the academic or work environment. Where appropriate, this may include development of a written conflict management plan, a copy of which shall be retained by the Office of the Provost. In the event that either party to the relationship disagrees with the proposed conflict management plan, the Provost may review, and shall have final authority to amend or approve, the plan.

B. Policy Violations.

1. Individuals may report alleged violations of this Policy to HRIC, Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity (CREO), and/or through the **University's Anonymous Reporting Hotline**.

2. CREO will review reports of alleged violations of this Policy in accordance with CREO's policies and procedures, as applicable.

3. Where Employees are found to have violated this Policy, the University may take appropriate corrective action in accordance with applicable University policies and procedures.

C. Those individuals who carry out this Policy, including those to whom disclosures are made and those involved in developing and implementing conflict management plans, shall do so in a manner that respects the privacy of the parties involved to the greatest extent possible and shall share information only to the extent necessary to manage potential conflicts and risks.

D. Individual University schools, divisions, and departments may establish their own, more restrictive policies (e.g., prohibiting a broader range of relationships),

but may not establish policies that contravene or conflict with this Policy. Prior to adopting a more restrictive policy, the applicable unit proposing their own, more restrictive policy, must submit such unit-level policy to the Office of General Counsel for review.

E. This Policy is not intended to restrict relationships between Students who happen to be student-workers (e.g., Students with work-study positions, teaching assistants). However, all Student-workers with supervisory responsibilities over other Students are subject to the requirements of this Policy.

F. Nothing in this Policy is intended to restrict the University's ability to address other prohibited conduct described in any of the University's other policies and procedures.

IV. DEFINITIONS

A. "Employee" means all full-time and part-time faculty, University staff, student workers part-time and temporary employees, professional research staff, and post- doctoral fellows. For purposes of this policy, "Employee" shall include advisors, mentors, or volunteers affiliated with a University program, whether paid or unpaid. For purposes of this policy, "Employee" shall not include student worker or others whose primary relationship with the University is that of a Student.

B. "Student" means an individual registered for or auditing classes at the University; admitted to or enrolled in any University program; or on University Premises for any purpose related to the same regardless of if the class, program, or other education activity is credit earning or part of a degree or non-degree program. An individual is also considered a Student under this definition if they have completed the immediately preceding term and are enrolled for a subsequent term or program; if they are representing the University between terms or programs; or, if they have been previously enrolled, but are on a leave of absence or otherwise have a continuing relationship with the University.

C. "Direct Authority" means direct academic, financial, evaluative, counseling, supervisory, or formal mentoring authority over any individual. If the individual is a Student, Direct Authority includes direct extracurricular or co-curricular authority over the individual).

V. RESOURCES

A. University Policy RISK 3.20.060 – *Conflict of Interest*

B. University Policy HRIC 3.10.050 -*Nepotism*

C. University Policy CREO 3.10.010 - *Discrimination and Harassment*

D. Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity Reporting Options

Revision Effective Date	Purpose
11/7/2025	*Minor change to correct title and reference number of policy in Resources*
__/___/2026	*Update to clarify process for reporting and review of reports made under this Policy*