

# Administrative Procedure 228.1A

**Name of Procedure:** Employee Relationships

**Policy Number:** 228

## **Purpose**

Lower Columbia College recognizes that sometimes a romantic and/or sexual relationship occurs or develops between a faculty member and a student, or a supervisor and a subordinate, creating an inherent conflict of interest. This procedure was established to ensure compliance with the Employee Relationships Policy 228.

## **Process**

If an employee has supervisory authority over a student or employee with whom they currently or previously had a romantic and/or sexual relationship with, the employee with supervisory authority must report the relationship to Human Resources and their supervisor immediately with the intent of seeking options to mitigate the potential conflict of interest. HR will assist the reporting employee and their supervisor to develop a plan with steps to take to ensure there is no longer an actual, apparent, or perceptible impropriety.

If no alternative can be identified, the romantic and/or sexual relationship must discontinue immediately until the employee no longer exercises supervisory authority over the student or employee.

## **Violations**

If an employee does not self-report and is determined to have violated this policy, they are subject to having disciplinary sanction(s) imposed using College policies, applicable collective bargaining agreements, and for students, the Lower Columbia College [Code of Student Conduct Policy 440](#).

Per College policies and collective bargaining agreements, disciplinary sanctions for the employee may include but is not limited to: mandatory training or counseling, transfer or reassignment, oral or written reprimands, reduction of pay, suspension, demotion or termination.

Sanctions will not be imposed when developing romantic and/or sexual relationships are self-reported promptly with the intent to remove the conflict of interest so long as the relationship is not alleged by one of the parties to be nonconsensual or discriminatory. If the relationship is alleged to be nonconsensual or discriminatory, Human Resources will conduct an investigation according to current policies.

## **Retaliation**

No one shall suffer penalty or retaliation, including any actions that may deter a reasonable person from making or supporting a charge or from reporting a relationship that violates this policy. Retaliation against any person for reporting a relationship or participating in an investigation related to this policy shall be grounds for discipline.

Retaliation occurs when a student or an employee suffers a negative action after they make a report of discrimination or sexual harassment, assists someone with a complaint, or participates in discrimination or sexual harassment prevention activities.

For students, retaliation can include but is not limited to being assigned an undeserved low or failing grade on an academic assignment, an undeserved poor academic or employment reference, denial of a reference, unfair treatment, or negative influence on College employment or financial aid.

For employees, retaliation can include but is not limited to demotion, suspension, denial of a promotion, poor evaluation, withholding of deserved support for promotion or tenure, punitive work assignments, unfair treatment, etc.

## **Malicious & Frivolous Allegations**

Members of the College community who knowingly make false allegations of prohibited faculty-student and supervisor-subordinate relationships shall be subject to disciplinary procedures. No complaint will be considered malicious or frivolous solely because it cannot be corroborated.

- 11-7-18           Governance Council
- 11-20-18        UMCC
- 11-26-18 to 12-10-18 Campus Review
- 1-2-19           Approved by ELT