

Proposal to Amend WKU Faculty Handbook

Section(s) to be amended: II.V.
Corresponding page number(s): 15
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1. Type of Change:

☐ Editorial (non-substantive)

☒ Substantive

Editorial revisions include updates to the organizational structure, web addresses and names/titles, as well as other similar non-substantive changes. Substantive change is defined as addition, deletion, or revision of policy or procedure.

☐ Addition: Where possible, identify the section of the handbook to which addition is proposed:

☐ Deletion: Identify the section of the handbook from which deletion is proposed:

☒ Revision: Identify the section of the handbook to which revision is proposed:

2. Proposals should be made in the form of text intended as an addition to or a replacement of, in whole or in part, some current section of the Faculty Handbook.

Current:

II.V. Faculty/Student Relationships: Sexual relations between students and faculty members are fraught with the potential for exploitation, and therefore expressly prohibited. The respect and trust accorded a professor by a student, as well as the power exercised by the professor in an academic or evaluative role, make voluntary consent by the student suspect. Further, these relationships might be less consensual than the individual whose position confers power or authority believes.

Even when both parties initially have consented, the power differential between faculty and student may make it difficult for the student to end a relationship for fear of retribution. The development of a WKU Faculty Handbook, 30th ed. 17 dating and/or sexual relationship renders both the faculty member and the institution vulnerable to possible later allegations of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual harassment, sexual assault) due to the significant power differential that exists between faculty members and students.

In their work-related relationships with students, members of the faculty are expected to be aware of their professional responsibilities and avoid apparent or actual conflict of interest, favoritism, or bias. A relationship between a faculty member and a student whom the faculty member evaluates, advises, or supervises, is expressly prohibited. A relationship between a student and a faculty 2 member in their department/school who does not directly evaluation, advise, or supervise or in another department/school at WKU is strongly discouraged.

Proposed Revision:

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Even when both parties initially have consented, the power differential between faculty and student may make it difficult for the student to end a relationship for fear of retribution. The development of a dating and/or sexual relationship renders both the faculty member and the institution vulnerable to possible later allegations of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual harassment, sexual assault) due to the significant power differential that exists between faculty members and students.

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3. Rationale for revision:

Revision is necessary to remove conflict between paragraph one of this Section and paragraph three of this Section.