1. PURPOSE

The University of Houston System and its component institutions ("University") are committed to maintaining a positive educational and working environment that is free from conflicts of interest, favoritism, and exploitation. This policy addresses dating, intimate, romantic, and/or sexual interactions that, although consensual, may create actual or perceived conflicts of interests, or create the possibility for exploitation or favoritism.

The University recognizes that consenting individuals associated with the University should generally be free to enter into personal relationships of their choice. However, such relationships must not risk undermining the essential educational purpose of the University or risk undermining the workplace and learning environment.

Accordingly, this policy prohibits inappropriate consensual relationships as defined in Section 2.1 below. This policy is applicable to any employee, including staff, faculty, and students at the University.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1. Inappropriate Consensual Relationship - Any consensual dating, intimate, romantic, and/or sexual relationship between any of the following:

   a) Employee (including staff, faculty, or student employees) and an individual that the employee teaches, instructs, manages, supervises, advises, counsels, oversees, grades, or evaluates in any way;

   b) Coach, trainer, or other athletics employee and a student-athlete coach, trainer, or athletics employee coaches, instructs, trains, provides treatment, manages, supervises, advises, counsels, oversees, or evaluates in any way.

2.2. Employee - Any staff member including, but not limited to, part-time, full-time, temporary, non-benefits eligible, contracted employees, or student workers whether being paid from University funds or not. Any faculty member including, but not limited to, non-tenure track, tenure-track, tenured, adjunct, instructors, instructional assistants, teaching assistants, lab assistants, or any other faculty member who provides teaching or instruction to a University student whether being paid from University funds or not.
3. POLICY

3.1. Prohibited Conduct

The University prohibits any Inappropriate Consensual Relationship as defined in Section 2.1 of this policy. Any non-consensual sexual relationship and/or acts of discrimination and harassment are addressed in the University’s Discrimination and Harassment Policy (SAM 01.D.07) and the University’s Sexual Misconduct Policy (SAM 01.D.08).

3.2. Complaints

Complaints regarding Prohibited Conduct shall be reported to the University’s Title IX Coordinator, who will inform the University of Houston System Office of Equal Opportunity Services (“EOS”). EOS will determine whether and to what extent an investigation will be conducted and provide a recommendation to the appropriate administrator, as necessary.

3.3. Discipline and Sanctions

University responses to violations of this Policy will vary as appropriate to the facts and circumstances of each case. Any individual who is in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action ranging from verbal warnings up to and including termination/dismissal of employment or expulsion. Any Employee subject to disciplinary action can grieve the disciplinary action pursuant to the applicable staff (SAM 02.A.05) or faculty grievance procedure. Students will have a right to grieve subject to the policies set forth in the University Student Handbook.

3.4. Retaliation Prohibited

Retaliation against a person who reports a potential violation under this policy, assists someone with a report of a violation, or participates in any manner in an investigation or in the resolution of a complaint made under this policy is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to threats, intimidation, reprisals and/or adverse actions related to an individual’s employment or education.

3.5. Exceptions to Policy

Only the Assistant Vice Chancellor/Vice President for Equal Opportunity Services/Title IX Coordinator or designee is authorized to grant exceptions to this policy.
4. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Parties:  Senior Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance
                      Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost
                      Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Enrollment Services
                      Assistant Vice Chancellor for Equal Opportunity Services

Review:  Every two years on or before August 1

5. APPROVAL

Approved:  

__________________________________________
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Enrollment Services

__________________________________________
Senior Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance

__________________________________________
Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost

__________________________________________
Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs and General Counsel

__________________________________________
Chancellor

Date:  

6. REFERENCES

System Administrative Memoranda (SAM) 01.D.07 – Discrimination and Harassment Policy

SAM 01.D.08 – Sexual Misconduct Policy
# REVISION LOG

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