

**University of Maryland Baltimore County Policy on  
Amorous and Sexual Relationships  
Revised July 1, 2004**

**Introduction**

The educational relationship between faculty (all those who teach at UMBC, including graduate students and other instructional personnel) and students is central to the academic mission of UMBC. The respect and trust accorded a professor by a student, as well as the power exercised by the professor in giving praise or criticism, grades, and recommendations for further study and future employment, diminishes the student's freedom of choice in amorous and sexual relationships, even when no coercion is intended by the faculty member. Likewise, the power exercised by a supervisor in the assignment of tasks, evaluations of work performance and recommendations for future promotion or employment diminishes a subordinate's freedom of choice in amorous and sexual relationships, even when no coercion is intended by the supervisor. In addition, such relationships can give rise to charges of favoritism by other students or employees in regard to grading, recommendations, promotions, salary increases, and access to educational or employment resources and opportunities. Thus, such relationships may subvert the fair and equal access to educational and employment resources to which UMBC is committed.

UMBC will not infringe upon the rights of faculty, staff, and students to associate freely, or upon their rights to privacy. At the same time, no personal ties should be allowed to interfere with the academic integrity of the faculty-student relationship or with the professional integrity of the supervisor-employee relationship. In the particular case of amorous and sexual relationships, the potential for harm to that integrity exists not only for the principals involved, but for the larger community. Consequently, it is prudent to avoid sexual relationships where educational or supervisory relationships exist and to presume that sexual advances are not welcomed by other prudent individuals in such contexts.

**I. Amorous and Sexual Relationships Initiated Within the Instructional/Supervisory Context**

Given the asymmetry of the relationship between faculty and students, faculty members are strongly cautioned against entering into an amorous or sexual relationship with students enrolled in their classes or subject to their supervision or evaluation. Likewise, given the asymmetry of the relationship between a supervisor and employee, supervisors are strongly cautioned against entering into an amorous or sexual relationship with employees subject to their supervision or evaluation. Such a relationship may result in a complaint of sexual harassment.

**II. Amorous and Sexual Relationships Predating Instruction or Supervision**

When a faculty member or supervisor is or has been involved in an amorous or sexual relationship with a person, entering into an evaluative role with that person can create a conflict of interest. When the principal parties are in the same academic unit, academically allied units, or in the same office or division, a pre-existing amorous or sexual relationship between the parties may appear to others to promote favoritism or other differential access to educational or employment resources.

**III. Requirement to Distance Oneself**

To avoid conflicts of interest, if a sexual or amorous relationship arose prior to or during an instructional or supervisory role, the faculty member or supervisor shall distance himself or herself from evaluative or supervisory decisions that involve that person.

**IV. Implementation**

Questions or instructions regarding the implementation of this policy should be directed to the Office of Human Relations Programs, the Office of the Provost, the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost of Research & Planning, or the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs.