POLICY ON PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FACULTY/OTHER EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS

I. Rationale

The integrity of the University’s Academic Mission is founded on the mutual trust and respect in faculty-student relationships. Similarly, the University is committed to the principle of protecting the integrity and objectivity of its faculty in the performance of their University duties. That same mutual trust and respect must exist in the relationships and interactions between students and University staff and administrators to provide a quality education to our students in an environment that encourages, nurtures, and supports learning. It is essential that the University’s Mission be carried out in a manner that is free of conflict of interest and supports the educational process.

Sexual relationships in which one member of the University community has supervisory or other evaluative responsibility for the other create the appearance of favoritism, the potential for actual favoritism and the potential for sexual harassment. This is also true of conduct that may reasonably be perceived as inviting or encouraging a sexual relationship. Such relationships can raise serious concerns about the validity of consent, conflict of interest and unfair treatment of others. They may undermine the real or perceived integrity of the evaluation and supervision provided and the trust inherent in such relationships.

II. Definitions and Scope

A. This policy applies to faculty members and all other administrators, staff members, graduate students and others who teach, supervise, or evaluate students’ academic work at Hofstra University; or whose duties and/or responsibilities include the supervision or evaluation of students’ employment, athletics or extracurricular activity.

B. Instructional context is broadly defined and includes academic instruction as well as evaluation or supervision, direct or indirect, of a student’s academic work. It also includes research assistantships or academic intern situations in which students are supervised by faculty members or other employees.

C. Supervisory context includes evaluation or supervision, direct or indirect, of a student’s extracurricular activities or employment. It includes employment situations in which students are supervised by administrators, faculty, staff members, graduate students or others as student employees; extracurricular situations in which students are supervised or evaluated by administrators, faculty, staff members, graduate students or others as volunteers or interns; or in athletic
team situations in which students are supervised or evaluated by staff, administrators, coaches or trainers.

III. Guidelines for Conduct

A. Within the instructional context and/or supervisory context, no faculty member, administrator, staff member, graduate student or any other employee (collectively “Employee”) shall engage in sexual relationships or conduct that may reasonably be perceived as inviting or encouraging a sexual relationship, with a student over whom the Employee has instructional, supervisory or evaluative responsibility.

B. Outside the instructional or supervisory context, the aforementioned conduct or relationships between Employees and students are discouraged although not expressly prohibited by University policy. Employees considering or engaged in such relationships should be sensitive to their potentially exploitative nature and the possibility that the Employee may unexpectedly be placed in a position of responsibility for the students’ instruction, supervision or evaluation.

IV. Complaints

Members of the University community who discern that violations of this Policy have occurred may initiate a complaint to the Equal Rights and Opportunity Officer (EROO). The EROO will investigate the complaint made and will speak to all parties involved. Complaints must be filed promptly and in no case later than one semester after the end of the semester or session in which the alleged violation occurred. Substantiated complaints will be forwarded to the appropriate Dean, Vice President, or the Provost for action.

V. Sanctions

Violations of this policy will be considered misconduct on the part of the Employee. Any faculty wishing to appeal his or her sanction can do so via the Senate Grievance Committee whose recommendation shall be sent to the Provost for final determination. The “Faculty Dismissal Proceedings” as outlined in the AAUP “Redbook” (2001) shall govern in any situation where dismissal is the final determination. Any administrator or staff member wishing to appeal his or her sanction can do so by informing the EROO within fifteen (15) days of the Vice President’s/Dean’s decision. The EROO will notify the University’s General Counsel, who will see to the formation of a University Review Board, whose members will be composed pursuant to §D(2)(b) of the Sexual Harassment Policy, to hear the appeal and make a recommendation to the President.

VI. This policy is independent of Hofstra University’s Sexual Harassment Policy (FPS 43).

FPS #47 (rev. 2013)