

Big Bend Community College is committed to providing an environment conducive to individual development and learning.

As a matter of sound judgment, all employees in the college community accept responsibility to avoid conflicts of interest between their professional responsibilities and their personal relationships with students or those whom they supervise, evaluate, or exercise other relationships of power or authority.

Romantic and/or sexual relationships between an employee and a student or a supervisor and a subordinate, may potentially pose risks to the employee, student, supervisor, subordinate, third parties, and department morale. A romantic and/or sexual relationship between an employee and a student, or a supervisor and subordinate, can lead to a complaint of sexual harassment when the student or subordinate perceives he or she was exploited.

In addition, other employees or students may express concern about undue access or advantage, favoritism, restricted opportunities, or unfavorable treatment as a result of the relationship. These concerns are damaging to the college whether the favoritism is real or perceived. Concerns may also arise in cases where the relationship between the employee and student, or supervisor and subordinate is familial in nature.

To ensure the activities of advising, mentoring, evaluation and supervision of students or subordinates are conducted fairly, employees are prohibited from the following:

1. Entering into romantic and/or sexual relationship with a student or employee with whom the employee has a current supervisory/subordinate relationship.
2. Entering into a romantic or sexual relationship with a student who is currently enrolled in the employee's class(es).
3. Entering into a romantic or sexual relationship with a student who is currently a member of an athletic team coached by the employee.

This policy does not apply to romantic and/or sexual relationships that are prohibited by law under [RCW 9A.44](#) or relationships that violate discrimination or sexual harassment laws and policies.

Some professionals employed by the college (i.e., counselors, nurses, childcare workers and others) may have different, more stringent professional standards that

must be met for continued licensure and/or certification. This policy does not preclude or replace any guidelines published by a particular professional organization. Big Bend Community College expects its employees to abide by the guidelines of any professional organization in which they are members in addition to the standards set forth in this policy.

Legal Reference: RCW 9A.44