

**Fairmont State University Board of Governors**  
**POLICY NO. 42**

**TITLE: CONSENSUAL ROMANTIC OR SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** November 10, 2005

In a commitment to foster an educational and work environment free from all forms of harassment and discriminatory behavior, Fairmont State University strongly discourages romantic or sexual relationships between faculty and student, supervisor and subordinate employee, and any other relationship where a power differential exists between the parties.

Even if consensual, these relationships are always a cause for concern because:

- a) they may involve one person's exerting power over another;
- b) conflict of interest issues may arise in evaluating a student or employee;
- c) there is a strong potential for retaliation when the relationship ends;
- d) a third party may allege favoritism;
- e) they undermine the professional interaction upon which faculty-student/supervisor-subordinate relationships should be based.

When a consensual relationship ends, there is the potential for a faculty member or supervisor in the relationship to threaten the student with a bad grade or the employee with a poor evaluation (sexual harassment); and/or for a student or employee to allege such action.