

**PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES BETWEEN THE FACULTY/STAFF OF CATAWBA  
COLLEGE AND STUDENTS OF CATAWBA COLLEGE**

Faculty approval: Apr 23, 2008.

One of Catawba College's objectives is to help students achieve personal goals through an education rich in personal attention. To achieve that objective, Catawba College maintains a low student-faculty ratio that provides faculty with opportunities to counsel students and offer support. Flexible office hours, one-on-one guidance and genuine concern for students are hallmarks of Catawba College's faculty and staff.

While faculty and staff are encouraged to foster wholesome and appropriate relationships with students, consensual amorous relationships between faculty or staff members and students, even of a consensual nature, are inherently problematic due to the unequal status of faculty or staff and students. Such relationships have the potential to threaten the trust and respect that are necessary for wholesome and appropriate faculty/staff-student relationships by creating:

- (1) perceived and actual undue favoritism that benefits students in consensual relationships with faculty or staff members;
- (2) a hostile and unacceptable environment for other students, faculty and staff, in which obtaining benefits appears contingent on amorous or sexual favors; and,
- (3) relationships that are less consensual than the faculty or staff member believes because of the complex and subtle effects of the power differential between faculty/staff members and students.

By jeopardizing the quality of faculty/staff-student interaction, these problems interfere with the mission of Catawba College.

For the reasons noted above, **faculty and staff shall not engage in consensual amorous relationships with students, even if the faculty or staff member has no immediate position of authority with respect to the student. An "amorous consensual relationship" is any romantic or physically intimate relationship.**

**Procedures**

**Implementation.** It is essential that faculty and staff members of the College be aware of their responsibilities under this policy. Central to the implementation of this College policy is avoidance of situations that may result in developing such consensual amorous relationship or even the appearance of such a relationship. Professional activities with students are of course fitting and proper; personal or private activities with students should be approached with great caution.

**Informal Resolution.** Attempts will be made to resolve the situation through informal and mutually satisfactory means. If the situation can be resolved, and professional and a consensual amorous relationships properly separated, and if there is no reason to believe that further problems exist, the matter will be ended.

**Formal Complaint Procedures.** Any member of the College community who believes that this faculty-staff-student policy is being violated may lodge a formal complaint to this effect with the appropriate College official(s), i.e., Dean of Students, Provost, Human Resources Officer. All complaints must be in writing and will be held in the strictest confidence. Disclosure concerning the existence, source, or substance of a complaint will be solely

at the discretion of the College official(s) investigating the complaint and will be limited to those who have an immediate need to know.

The Dean of Students, Provost, and the Human Resources Officer will follow a process like that in the Catawba Sexual Harassment Policy for the investigation and initial resolutions of the complaint to resolve the problem as expeditiously and confidentially as possible. This is a serious issue and has strong ramifications for both the students and the faculty/staff members involved. Students will not be penalized or discriminated against in any way for reporting incidents, but knowingly filing a false or malicious complaint will be considered a violation of the Honor Code.

Violation of this policy may result in sanctions up to and including termination of employment for employees. For faculty members with continuous tenure, any decision to terminate employment will follow procedures for termination with adequate cause.

#### **Amorous Consensual Relationships Between Faculty and Staff**

To preserve the integrity, respect, and professionalism among faculty and staff at Catawba College, both the fact and semblance of any exploitation must be avoided. The relative difference in power -- actual or perceived -- in working relationships must be recognized by the faculty and staff and must not be employed to anyone's advantage or disadvantage. Therefore, a faculty or staff member shall not exercise direct supervisory, evaluative, instructional, and/or advisory responsibilities, or participate in hiring, retention, promotion, or award decisions, for someone with whom there exists or has existed a consensual amorous relationship within the previous three years.

Faculty or staff who believe that this policy has been violated should report the incident to the appropriate College official(s) (i.e., Dean of Students, Provost, Human Resources Officer), who will follow the Catawba College Sexual Harassment Policy for the investigation and initial resolution of the complaint to conduct an investigation as expeditiously and confidentially as possible. Employees will not be retaliated against for good-faith reporting of violations of the policy or for providing information truthfully in connection with an investigation.

Disciplinary actions under the appropriate policies concerning personal misconduct will be taken against any person bringing a malicious or frivolous complaint in bad faith.