

Conflict of Interest: Employee-Student Romantic Relationships

Performance art includes shared experiences, collaboration, and opportunities to form new connections. Sharing space as part of the creative process can include exploring the unknown, discovering new things about ourselves, and experiencing vulnerability. We have a responsibility to meet each other in an enduring spirit of professional respect, trust, and safety -- *especially* when we occupy the role of teacher, mentor, or leader.

In the UW Department of Dance, we hold ourselves to the highest standard of conduct as professional educators and artists. By doing so, we contribute to the success and wellbeing of our students, the health of the entire dance community, as well as our own growth and integrity. With these values in mind, the Department of Dance fully supports and will apply all aspects of the University's policy regarding Employee–Student Romantic Relationships and Conflicts of Interest (Executive Order 54).

<https://www.washington.edu/admin/rules/policies/PO/EO54.html>

The Department of Dance considers it an immediate and unmanageable conflict of interest for any department employee or professional guest to initiate or reciprocate a romantic exchange, encounter, or relationship with a subordinate student at the University.

- In the case of faculty and staff, all students are considered subordinate. We also extend this policy to invited guest artists, choreographers, staggers, photographers, etc. while they participate in departmental activities.
- In the case of student employees, a subordinate student is any other student over whom the student employee has or could have a position of influence or authority – whether real or perceived.

Due to the unmanageable nature of these conflicts, the Department considers any such relationships or encounters to be prohibited.

Any graduate student in the Department of Dance -- regardless of current employment status -- has the potential to become a student employee or to have a position of authority over undergraduates who participate in departmental activities. Our undergraduate courses and our concert auditions are available to all current UW undergraduate students. Therefore, any undergraduate should be considered a potential participant in our department community. The department considers it an unmanageable conflict of interest for any graduate student enrolled in the department to initiate or reciprocate a romantic exchange, encounter, or relationship with an undergraduate student.

Pre-existing relationships and peer-to-peer relationships (e.g., relationships between graduate students) also represent a risk for conflict of interest. Such relationships must be disclosed by the employee(s) to the appropriate supervisor in order to determine if the conflict can be managed through an acceptable plan.

WHOM TO CONTACT

All members of the UW Department of Dance community are welcome and encouraged to bring forward a conflict of interest, misconduct report, safety issue, or other concern. The department will respect and protect confidentiality at all times and will never participate in or tolerate retaliation. Visit the department's "How to Voice a Concern" webpage for contact information.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

- SAFE CAMPUS:
<https://www.washington.edu/safecampus/>
- UW OMBUD:
<https://www.washington.edu/ombud/>
- UCIRO:
<https://www.washington.edu/uciro/>
- TITLE IX:
<https://www.washington.edu/titleix/>
- HUSKY HEALTH & WELLBEING:
<https://wellbeing.uw.edu/topic/safety/>
- ADDITIONAL WELLNESS LINKS:
<https://dance.washington.edu/health>

RELATED TOPICS & INFORMATION

- Employee Responsibilities and Employee Conflict of Interest (EO 32)
<https://www.washington.edu/admin/rules/policies/PO/EO32.html>
- Sexual Violence Elimination (EO 51)
<https://www.washington.edu/admin/rules/policies/PO/EO51.html>
- UW Student Conduct Code
<https://www.washington.edu/cssc/for-students/student-code-of-conduct/>