

# **Oberlin College and Conservatory**

## **Prohibited Relationships Policy**

Intimate, sexual, or romantic relations between persons occupying asymmetrical positions of power or authority, even when consensual, compromises respect for standards of professional conduct and unreasonably subjects the employee and College to claims of sexual harassment. Similarly, these relationships may impact third parties based on perceived or actual favoritism or special treatment based on the relationship.

Oberlin College and Conservatory (“Oberlin College”) faculty, staff, and trustees are prohibited from engaging in sexual, intimate, or romantic relationships with Oberlin College students or participants in College sponsored programs to whom they are not married or in a formal domestic partnerships, even when both parties believe the conduct is consensual. This prohibition reflects an understanding that power inequalities due to role differences between those with positional authority and students or program participants affect the possibilities of effective consent. This prohibition also reflects the College’s commitment to respecting the integrity and character of the unique teaching and mentoring relationship that exists between instructors and students or program participants. Any individual who believes they have been harmed because of undue access or advantage, favoritism, restricted opportunities, or unfavorable treatment resulting from a sexual, intimate, or romantic relationship between an employee or trustee and a student or program participant may file a complaint. Employees or trustees who are aware of intimate, sexual, or romantic relationships between an employee or trustee and a student or program participant have a responsibility to report that information to the Director of the Office for Institutional Equity.

In cases where there is a pre-existing relationship between an employee or trustee and a student or program participant, the employee must disclose the relationship to the Office of Human Resources and a trustee must disclose the relationship to the Office of the Vice President, General Counsel or Secretary before beginning employment, program supervision, or trustee service so that a conflict of interest plan can be developed. Employee and trustees have an ongoing duty to report any potential conflict of interest that might develop because of a change in status of a student or program participant.

Retaliation against persons who report concerns about prohibited relationships is prohibited and constitutes a violation of this policy.

Alleged violations of this policy will be resolved consistent with the procedures for violations of the Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.