

UFC-Sponsored Resolution Covering the Situation When a Student Wants to Enroll in Course Taught by a Family Member

Resolution

Whereas there is an opportunity for bias grading whenever one family member enrolls in a course taught by another family member;

Whereas there is a significant number students on campus with faculty parents;

Whereas there is no specific mention of this situation in [Policy 4.6](#) (Standards of Ethical Conduct) or in [Policy 4.14](#) (Conflict of Interest or Commitment);

Whereas [Policy 6.3](#) (Consensual Relationships) insists on recusal plans for potentially problematic student-faculty relationships;

Be it resolved that the following text, or language reasonably consistent with the proposed text, be incorporated in Policy 4.14:

A student is not allowed to enroll in a course that is taught (or co-taught) by a family member unless (1) it is required by the student's degree program and no substitute courses are available and (2) there are no alternative scheduling options that are free of conflict of interest concerns. If both of these conditions are satisfied, then a recusal plan that ensures the integrity of the grading process must be developed and co-signed by the student, the instructor, and the chair of the instructor's department (or equivalent).

Background

The following excerpts from existing policies have bearing on the resolution:

1. Policy 6.3 (Consensual Relationships):

The university strives to protect the integrity of students' and postgraduates' university experience, with the freedom to pursue academic, training, research, and professional interests in an environment without preferential or unfair treatment, discrimination, harassment, bias, or coercion. In addition, the university expects faculty and others in positions of authority to manage their responsibilities appropriately and with sound professional judgment and impartiality. Finally, the university supports an overall educational environment that is free from conflicts of interest.

That policy would forbid a situation in which there was a consensual relationship between the student and the instructor.

2. Policy 4.6 (Standards of Ethical Conduct)

This policy offers this advice to all members of the community about conflicts of interest and commitment:

- Advise appropriate parties of potential conflicts in accordance with applicable university conflicts policies.
- Avoid any activity that hinders your ability to carry out responsibilities to the university.

The twin message of “be transparent” and “be careful” seems relevant.

3. Policy 4.14 (Conflicts of Interest and Commitment)

This policy offers a definition, a description of Col management, and a caveat:

Typically, a conflict of interest may arise when an individual has the opportunity to influence the university's business, administrative, academic, or other decisions in ways that could lead to personal gain or advantage of any kind. Upon full reporting, the university may approve a transaction or affiliation, provided that the conflict can be managed. In many cases, the conflict can be managed through disclosure. In some cases, the individual may be required to report on the conflict annually. The university will disapprove the transaction or affiliation if a conflict of interest is involved that cannot be managed.

It is obvious from this that a recusal plan should be required to cover the situation under consideration.