

“Policy 6.x” : Consensual Relationships

The Consensual Relationships Policy Committee

Charlie Van Loan and Anna Waymack (co-chairs)

Our Recommendations Are Based On Broad Consultation and Research

1. The Committee has met 13 times since November.
2. Dozens of great insights posted by colleagues on our website.
3. Reviewed policies at 50+ peer institutions.
4. The Co-chairs have met with 7+ College HR directors, 20+ GFA's, all the DGS's, all the academic deans, all the assemblies, and multiple student groups.

Totally transparent from start to finish.

CRPC = Faculty + Grads + Ugrads + Post Docs + Employees + Key Offices

Ella Ackerman
Joseph Anderson
Sofie Cornelis
Renee Cornell
Caitlin Gleason
Grace Park
Jesse Pollard

Sarah Affel
Sandy Dhimitri
Janna Lamey
Laura Weiss

Jenna Chong
Aubrie James
Stephen Kim
Katherine Quinn
Nate Stetson
Anna Waymack

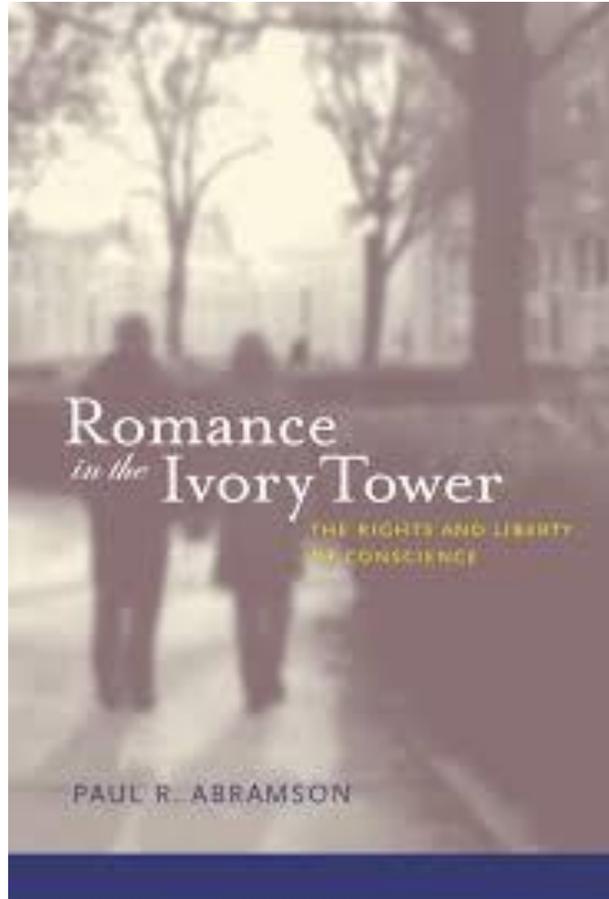
Daniela Harris
Gina Giambattista
Pilar Thompson
Laura Johnson-Kelly

Rhonda Gilmore
Kim O'Brian
Charlie Seyler
Gillian Turgeon
Charlie Van Loan
Makda Weatherspoon

Tisha Bohr
Emily Davenport

Charged by President Pollack. Final report due May 1.

Mantra: Try to Understand as Many
Points of View as Possible



We have a constitutional right to make intimate choices as long as they do not cause harm.

The Ninth Amendment protects the “right to romance.”

“Right to romance” is a fundamental right of conscience—as are freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

**“If this is
feminism,
it’s feminism
hijacked by
melodrama.”**

**Unwanted
Advances**

Sexual Paranoia Comes to Campus

Laura Kipnis

“The stifling sense of sexual danger sweeping American campuses doesn't empower women, it impedes the fight for gender equality.”

“It’s not unheard of for professors to urge students to press charges against other professors, or otherwise play the process to their advantage.”

“Sexuality is often on public display, but people are also ready to be offended – and into this mess has stepped officialdom.”

“The relationship between a teacher and a student depends on trust and benefits from mutual respect. As soon as a teacher makes a sexual advance, the relationship is altered irrevocably.”

“Sexual harassment policies that are not supplemented by consensual sexual relationships policies will leave some students without adequate support and resources.”

Margaret Mack (1999). “Regulating Sexual Relationships Between Faculty and Students,” *Michigan Journal of Gender and Law*, 6 (1) , 79-112.

“Even though power dynamics can be potentially involved, such a prohibition also impinges on the freedom of those seeking such relationships out of their own conscious will. It takes personal agency away from adult graduate students and faculty members. **Even if such relationships may cause personal problems, individuals should be left to live and learn from their life experiences.**”

“I think faculty student relationships would be disruptive to the professional atmosphere of any department, and could drive a wedge between student or faculty colleagues if there are impressions of favoritism and impropriety. Not having a policy like this in place may also encourage faculty to pursue graduate students, as there are no repercussions and no formal social standards for professional behavior in many departments. **I have seen this lack of clear expectations drive inappropriate behavior in my own department.**”

Recent GPSA survey on the merits of having a same-field grad-faculty ban.

What is a Consensual Relationship Policy?

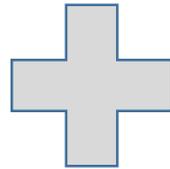
They Typically Have Three Parts

1. They identify workplace situations where romantic or sexual relationships are prohibited.
2. They include a mechanism for disclosure and recusal.
3. They specify enforcement procedures.

They Have a Scope

Possible
Authorities

Staff
Faculty
Post Graduate
Graduate
Undergraduate

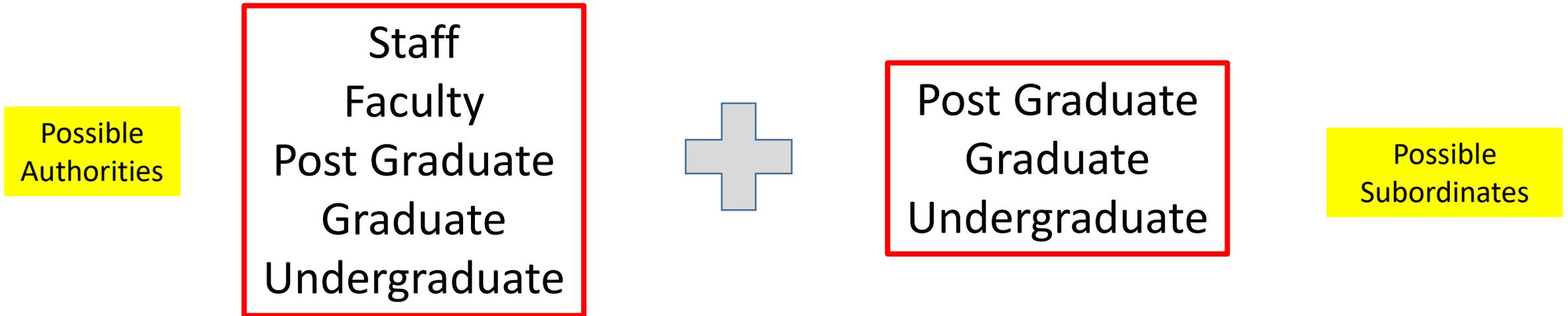


Post Graduate
Graduate
Undergraduate

Possible
Subordinates

For us, the subordinate is either a Student or Postdoc

They Address Power Imbalance



The authority can influence the academic or professional progress of the subordinate.

They Deal with a Fundamental Tension

The University should not be involved in the private lives of faculty, students, and staff.

vs

Students and post-graduates must be able to realize their academic ambitions in a climate that is devoid of favoritism and the potential for coercion.

Agency, Consenting Adults

Any Person, Any Study

Can we have “in loco Ezra” without “in loco parentis”?

What Do We Say About Disclosure
And Enforcement?

Disclosure

The Tension:

No one supports the emergence of a “Big Brother Love Police Force ” that would chill collegiality and the open friendliness that drives both teaching and research.

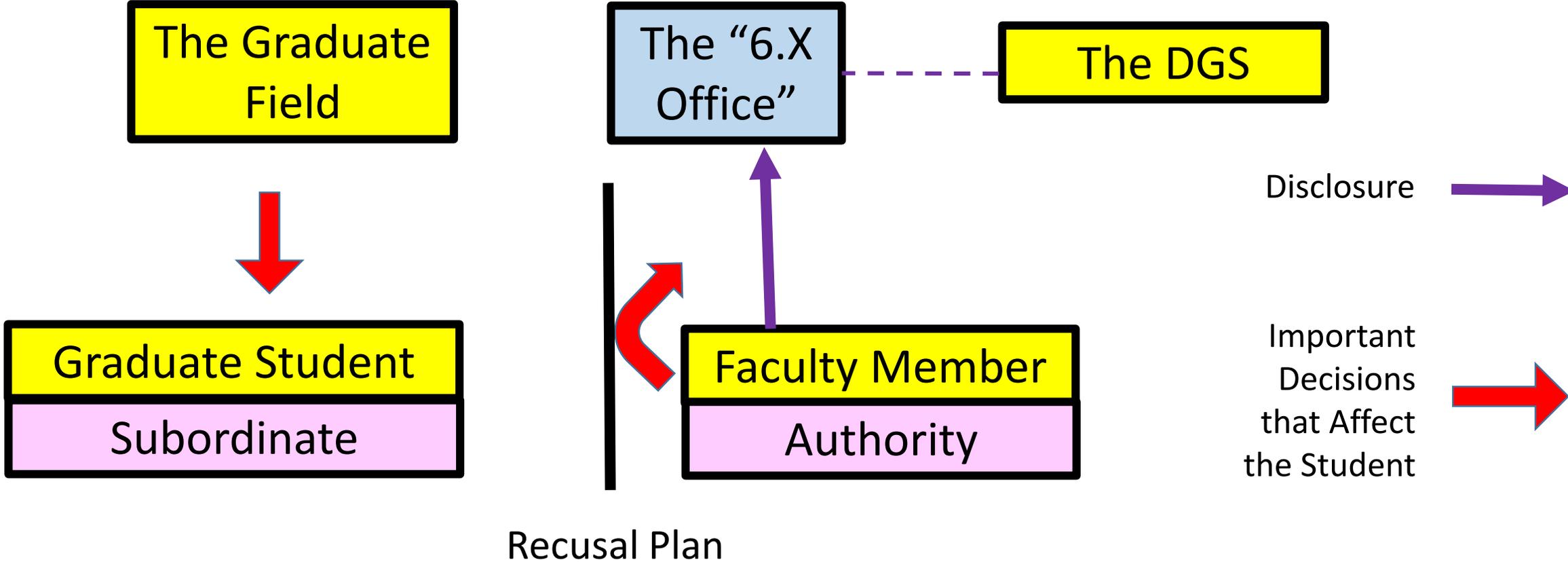
vs

Workplace romance has to be managed through disclosure and intelligent recusal plans to protect both subordinate **and** the academic environment.

The Plan:

We recommend the creation of a Policy 6.x office that would serve as a resource for subordinates, authorities, and those concerned with enforcement.

Disclosure Situation that Removes Direct Authority



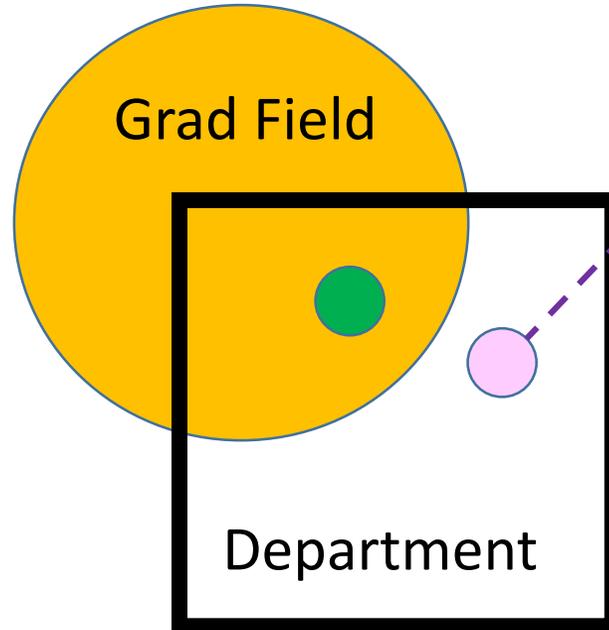
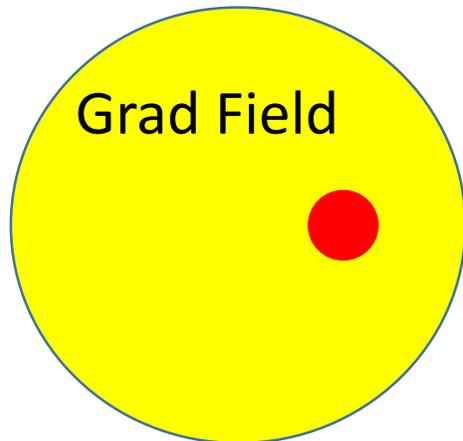
Recusal Plan: Put together by 6.X office, DGS, and Faculty member.
Typical: Faculty Member cannot participate in Field decisions that concern funding/progress.

Another Disclosure Situation

● Graduate Student

○ Romantic Partner

● Minor Advisor



The "6.x Office"

The partner ○ and the advisor ● share a lab in a department.

The recusal plan works to preserve the integrity of the lab and it communicates a simple message to all concerned: pay attention.

Enforcement (and Education)

The Tension:

Privacy, confidentiality, and due process are essential if we are to have effective enforcement.

vs

The community needs visible evidence that the policy is working as a mechanism for the prevention of sexual harassment.

The Plan:

The 6. x Office works with department chairs, degree program directors, college deans, the dean of faculty, and others. Monitors recusal plans. Keeps things simple and clear for chairs and degree program directors.Etc.

What are the Recommended
Prohibitions?

Prohibition P1

Any member of the Cornell community who has (or has had) a romantic or sexual relationship with a student or post-graduate is prohibited from exercising academic or professional authority over that student or post-graduate.

Prohibition P2
“ugrad ban”

A romantic or sexual relationship between an undergraduate student and a faculty member or coach is prohibited regardless of the student’s department, school, or college affiliation.

Prohibition P3
“field ban”

A romantic or sexual relationship between a graduate or professional student and a faculty member is prohibited whenever both parties are affiliated with the same department, field, or degree program.

The Community is Quite Split on P3

Grads in favor of P3 tend to think about community rights:

“For other students, aware of the relationship, it creates an uncomfortable environment because a faculty member is no longer simply a superior, but a friend's lover, which can make it difficult to work with them in a professional manner if grades or critique are involved. “

Grads NOT in favor of P3 tend to think about individual rights:

“Essentially, this is nobody's business but those involved in the relationship, and people can date who they want to with consent. Let adults be adults. Spend your time with more useful programs, like preventing sexual harassment in the workplace or making campus safer to walk in at night. This is absurd and draconian. “

Members of the Senate & the Assemblies Are Being Asked to Check One Box

- I support “CRP-A” which includes P1 + Ugrad Ban + Field Ban
- I support “CRP-B” which includes P1 + Ugrad Ban
- I support neither CRP-A nor CRP-B

Times Change

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Times Change

What once looked like harmless behavior turns out not to be so harmless from the subordinate's point of view

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What are we going to do about it?