

**POLICIES REGARDING SEXUAL, ROMANTIC, AMOROUS, AND/OR  
DATING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND LEARNERS**

- WHEREAS:** Institutions of higher education are responsible for the safety and health of their employees, which includes safety from sexual assault, sexual harassment, and identity-based discrimination; and
- WHEREAS:** AFT Michigan has previously resolved that current campus conversations related to improving responses to sexual assault, harassment, and identity-based discrimination are primarily reactive, rather than proactive; and
- WHEREAS:** AFT Michigan has previously resolved that Michigan's institutions of higher education are experiencing a crisis of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and insidious gender, sex, and sexuality based harassment; and
- WHEREAS:** AFT Michigan has previously resolved that current campus reforms related to safety on higher education campuses frequently fail to include the perspectives of graduate student employees who study and work on these campuses; and
- WHEREAS:** Sexual violence and identity-based discrimination impact all learners in higher education, including graduate student employees whose experience is unique, due to their status as both employees and learners under the authority of faculty and instructors; and
- WHEREAS:** Institutions of higher education must commit to policies prohibiting behaviors which adversely impact a person's ability to fully participate in the scholarly, research, educational, patient care, and service missions of institutions of higher education; and
- WHEREAS:** The teacher- and advisory-student relationships lie at the foundation of the educational process, and institutions of higher education are committed to putting students' interests first in assessing the challenges and competing interests that arise when defining safe and constructive relationships; and
- WHEREAS:** As a matter of sound judgment and professional ethics, faculty or instructors have a responsibility to avoid any apparent or actual conflict between their professional responsibilities and personal relationships with students; and
- WHEREAS:** Relationships which can reasonably be described as sexual, romantic, amorous, and/or dating, wherein physical contact is not a required element, are uniquely vulnerable to mistreatment and exploitation, and therefore should be covered by any policy defining safe, constructive, and consensual relationships between faculty or instructors and their learners; and
- WHEREAS:** As the only union representing graduate employees in the state of Michigan, AFT Michigan is ideally positioned to coordinate statewide advocacy efforts in response to sexual assault, harassment, and discrimination on public campuses of higher education; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**
- RESOLVED:** That sexual, romantic, amorous, and/or dating relationships between faculty or instructors in academic or supervisory roles and their learners and/or advisees (current or for 2 years after the end of the advisory or supervisory role) are a violation of authority,

inimical to the educational goals of both parties; that the inherent power disparity and implicit opportunity for mistreatment and exploitation in such relationships makes the consensuality impossible to determine; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**

**RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan supports policies that mandate the disclosure and prohibition of such relationships.

Submitted by the Graduate Employees' Organizing Committee, Local 6123 and the Union of Part-Time Faculty, Local 477

Recommended for adoption by the Human Rights Committee

Approved by the 76th AFT Michigan Convention (May 16, 2020)

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