Administrative Policy Memo 14

Spouse/Partner Conflicts of Interest

Administrative Procedures regarding Spouse/Partner Conflicts of Interest

The University of Washington Faculty Handbook sets forth guidelines designed to address Conflict of Interest (volume 2, part 2, chapter 24 and vol. 4, part 5, chapter 2). The purpose of this document is to elaborate more specific procedures applicable to everyday decision-making that occurs in the School of Drama. In all situations, the goal is to ensure that a spouse/partner in the School of Drama does not receive differential treatment (good or bad) because of that person's relationship with another member of the School.

Below are areas of decision making where conflicts of interest could arise, with particular attention to cases where the spouse/partner is the Director of the school. The text in italics summarizes the typical decision-making process; it is followed by alternative procedures to address situations that involve a spouse/partner.

A. Reviews and Recommendations for Promotion, Pay Raises, Merit, and Annual Conferences

Recommendations for promotion, pay raises, and merit are made by the Executive Director to the Divisional Dean based upon consultation and review by faculty of a rank higher than the person being reviewed. Annual conferences are conducted by the Executive Director.

Chair Designate: At its final meeting of the academic year, the Executive Council will determine at least two names of faculty willing to serve as a Chair Designate for the purposes named in this document. The Divisional Dean then selects from this list a Chair Designate for a two year term. The Divisional Dean may request additional names, possibly including faculty whose appointments are not in the School.

- A faculty or staff member will not be involved in any facet of review, recommendation, voting, or correspondence of results regarding a spouse/partner. In the case of Executive Director as spouse/partner of the person under review, the Chair Designate would correspond directly with the Divisional Dean.
- In the case of Executive Director as spouse/partner, annual conferences will be conducted by the Chair Designate. The Chair Designate should read all student and peer teaching evaluations.

B. Funding for Research, Reaching, and Service Activities

- In the case of special funding requests (e.g., bringing a speaker to campus, funds for a class project), the request would be brought by the Chair Designate to the Executive Council for review. If approved, the request would be executed by the Chair Designate.
- Requests for small amounts of funds (e.g., under $150) may be approved directly by the Chair Designate for a spouse/partner, not to exceed $300/year without consultation with the Executive Committee.

C. Teaching Schedule and Load, TA Assignments, New Course Proposals
Typically, routine scheduling, load, and TA assignments are first developed by the relevant Area Head in consultation with individual faculty as needed, then recommendations are forwarded to Executive Director for final approval and execution. New Course proposals typically go to the Executive Council, then to full faculty, for review and approval. For special requests in regard to teaching (e.g., course release, research quarters, sabbatical requests), please see section E below.

- Any committee member, including a committee chair, will excuse himself or herself from specific discussion and recommendation regarding spouse/partner’s teaching schedule, load, TA assignments, or new course proposals.
- In the case of Executive Director as the spouse/partner, the Chair Designate would execute the area head’s recommendation in regard to the spouse/partner, in consultation, as appropriate, with the relevant curriculum personnel. If there are compelling reasons why the area should be altered in a way that would affect his or her spouse/partner (e.g., due to budget or other considerations), the Chair Designate and Divisional Dean of Arts will discuss and reach an agreement.

D. Department Committee Assignments

Typically, committee assignments are made by the Executive Director.

- In the case of Executive Director as the spouse/partner, the Chair Designate would consult with the School of Drama Executive Council regarding assignments involving a spouse/partner. Any concerns regarding differential treatment may be discussed with the Executive Councilor Divisional Dean of Arts.

E. Special requests and endorsements

Special requests (e.g., course releases, research quarters, sabbatical leave, School recommendations or prioritizations for grants or fellowships) are discussed with the appropriate area head and then go directly to and are executed by the Executive Director.

- Where the Executive Director is partner/spouse, special requests would be brought by the Chair Designate to the Divisional Dean of Arts for review. Any letters of endorsement or evaluation would be executed by the Chair Designate or Divisional Dean, explaining why (if needed) the Executive Director is not participating in the endorsement or evaluation.
- For routine signatures on materials that do not require a competitive evaluation or prioritization by the Executive Director (e.g., to reserve a room or submit an application to a teaching forum or an RRF), the Chair Designate may sign without need for consultation with others.

F. Concerns or Complaints

Typically, concerns regarding School activities are brought to the Executive Director.

- Where the Executive Director is partner/spouse, faculty or staff members (including his/her partner) may take any concerns regarding conflicts of interest to the Chair Designate or, if necessary, the Divisional Dean of Arts, without prior consultation with the Executive Director and without fear of reprisal. In addition, if the Chair Designate has any concerns about unfair evaluations and inappropriate actions as a result of decisions the/she has made regarding the partner/spouse, they may also take these concerns to the Divisional Dean, without prior consultation with the Executive Director and without fear of reprisal. Those who hear concerns will respect the confidentiality of this process.

G. Hiring

- A faculty member will excuse him or herself from hiring discussions and votes that involve a spouse/partner.
- When the School is considering the hire or renewal of a spouse/partner, the Executive Council should organize a procedure that allows for a round of anonymous discussions to take place prior to a vote. This might, for example, involve Catalyst or requesting that the College organize a process that solicits faculty comments that would be summarized and made available to faculty on an anonymous basis.
H. Confidentiality

- Faculty and staff have a right to expect that the Executive Director will not share private or confidential conversations or issues regarding them with a partner/spouse who is also a member of the School and vice versa.

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