University Policies and Procedures

07-02.10 - EMPLOYMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE SAME FAMILY/HOUSEHOLD AND CONSENSUAL AMOROUS RELATIONSHIPS (NEPOTISM)

I. **Purpose:** Towson University (“University”) attempts to seek and hire the best possible qualified candidates for its vacant positions. However, Supervisor/Subordinate Relationships between Family Members are prohibited, except as otherwise provided below. This policy outlines circumstances in which members of the same family or household are eligible for employment at the University.

II. **Definition:**

A. **Consensual Amorous Relationship** means a consensual romantic, sexual, or dating relationship.

B. **Domestic Partner** is an individual (of any gender) in a committed Consensual Amorous Relationship with a University faculty or staff member who is neither married nor related by blood, adoption or law to the faculty or staff member.

C. **Family Member** means a relationship by blood or marriage, including spouse, child, step-child, parent, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchildren, aunt, uncle, nephew, niece, cousin, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law and/or daughter-in-law. For purposes of this definition, other persons living in the same household, including Domestic Partners, and those in Consensual Amorous Relationships living in or outside of the same household are included.

D. **Personnel Decisions** are any and all employment or volunteer related actions, including but not limited to decisions related to hiring, supervision, direction of work, promotion, compensation, work/volunteer hours, performance evaluation, termination, influencing and/or acting as an advocate or judge with respect to conditions of employment, voting, recommending, or in any other way participating in a decision that may directly affect the appointment, promotion, demotion, salary, terms and conditions of employment, or other status or interest of another.

E. **Supervisor/Subordinate Relationship** means a relationship in which one Family Member reports to another Family Member and/or makes Personnel Decisions directly affecting another Family Member.
III. Responsible Executive and Office:
Responsible Executive: Vice President for Legal Affairs & Human Resources and General Counsel

Responsible Office: Office of Human Resources

IV. Entities Affected by this Policy: All University faculty and staff. This policy does not apply to appointments and promotions made, or to family relationships which existed, prior to the effective date of the USM policy (2/28/92).

V. Procedures:

A. General. Members of the same family are eligible for employment at Towson University. However, a Supervisor/Subordinate Relationship shall not exist between Family Members, nor shall one Family Member have or assume for another the role of advocate or judge with respect to condition of employment or promotion.

No employee shall have or assume the role of Supervisor, advocate or judge with respect to conditions of employment, voting, recommending, or in any other way participating in a decision that may directly affect the appointment, promotion, demotion, salary, or other status or interest for a Family Member.

B. Family Members Recommended to Work for the Same Supervisor. When Family Members work or are recommended to work for the same supervisor, the arrangement must be approved in advance by the President or President’s designee. No appointment of a Family Member may be made without such prior approval.

Departments considering hiring a Family Member of a current employee must contact the Office of Human Resources (OHR) prior to scheduling interviews. The OHR will work with the Search Committee to ensure the policy is adhered to.

C. Development of a Supervisor/Subordinate Relationship after Employment. If a Supervisor/Subordinate Relationship between Family Members develops during employment, Family Members must notify the Associate Vice President of Human Resources or designee immediately. The University is responsible for ensuring that the Supervisor/Subordinate Relationship ceases. Action by the University may include transfer, reassignment, or removal of one or more Family Members.

If actions to avoid a Supervisor/Subordinate Relationship between Family Members are not feasible, the next highest administrative supervisor of the employees may request an exception. The request shall be made in writing to the President, or, as appropriate the Chancellor or Board of Regents, and forwarded to
the Associate Vice President of Human Resources for initial review and consideration. Requests shall address:

1. the unique circumstances that prevent actions to avoid a Supervisor/Subordinate Relationship among Family Member employees;

2. the specialized qualifications of the Family Member employees or other factors that demonstrate why their continued employment is in the best interest of the University, despite the Supervisor/Subordinate Relationship; and

3. proposed measures to restrict participation of the supervising Family Member in any personnel actions affecting the subordinate Family Member, including specific alternative procedures for the ongoing supervision and evaluation of the Family Member. Proposed measures will:

   a. address reporting relationships, supervisions and evaluation to assure that no Family Member would make, participate in making, or influence Personnel Decisions relating to any other Family Member;

   b. establish a review and approval process for expenditures to sufficiently mitigate or preclude the appearance of favoritism; and

   c. periodic review and revision (as needed) of the approved management plan should occur at least annually, and also whenever there is a relevant change in reporting relationships.

Related Policies:

USM Policy on Employment of Members of the Same Family (VII-2.10)

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