

## Standards for Faculty/Graduate Student Relationships

**Objectives.** The purpose of this document is to specify our field standards of behavior for faculty and graduate student relationships. We recognize such relationships are only one facet of field climate, but in many ways they are fundamental to a healthy graduate program. We focus on four main types of faculty-graduate student relationships: 1) the relationship between advisors and their advisees; 2) the relationship between seminar instructors and course participants; 3) the relationship between course directors and teaching assistants; and 4) the relationship between faculty and graduate student researchers. For each type of relationship, we describe overarching goals of the relationship, norms of behavior for participants in the relationships, and situations that may signal a problem.

This document is intended to serve several functions. First, it is designed to clarify, reinforce, and promote healthy values and norms among current faculty and graduate students in the Graduate Field of Communication. Second, the document should be used to communicate our values and norms to new and visiting faculty, scholars and graduate students. Finally, this document is designed to serve as a vehicle for promoting continuing dialogue about faculty/graduate student relationships.

**Value Statement.** The Graduate Field of Communication seeks to promote the welfare and intellectual pursuits of faculty and graduate students. Toward this goal, we acknowledge that faculty and graduate students are both responsible for contributing to a supportive climate. We believe that faculty-student relationships should be characterized by the following:

- an appreciation of diverse values, goals, and perspectives
- consideration of one another's welfare and interests
- negotiated expectations and decision-making
- honoring and upholding the boundaries of privacy
- mutual respect and trust

On the following pages, we provide more specific goals and expectations for the differing areas of activity in which graduate students and faculty typically interact. Graduate students and faculty are expected to familiarize themselves with these principles, and to strive to promote their successful realization.

**Meet to Discuss.** Each faculty member should meet with his or her advisees and carefully go over the expectations put forth in this document. For new graduate students, this meeting should occur within a few weeks of arrival and, if the student switches advisors, within one month of the switch a meeting should occur to go over this document with the new advisor. It is recommended that this document be included in graduate course syllabi, discussed with teaching assistants, and included in the training of research assistants.

**Courses of Action.** Should any student or faculty member feel that the expectations set out in this document have been violated, the first course of action should be to discuss the problem openly. When this is not possible, the Director of Graduate Studies or the Chair of the Special Committee should be contacted. If issues cannot be resolved there, or if either party does not feel comfortable discussing the problem with these individuals, the Chair of the Department should be informed. Of course, for certain problems, formal grievance procedures should be followed. These procedures can be found on the [Graduate School website](#).