

Please be advised that outside lawyers have been retained to investigate any allegations of violation of this policy. Complaints do not need to be in writing.

- If a complaint is against a Member of the Assembly, please contact Lianne Pinchuk at (518) 915-3933.
- If a complaint is against an employee of the Assembly, please contact Brian Selchick at (518) 788-9426.

POLICY PROHIBITING FRATERNIZATION WITH STUDENT INTERNS

Every year the New York State Assembly welcomes hundreds of student interns for an academic and employment experience. These student interns are here to learn about the legislative process, work in government offices, conduct legislative research and drafting, and interact professionally with the public. The Assembly takes great pride in providing this invaluable "practical experience" component of the academic lives of these student interns.

In most, if not all circumstances, these student interns come to the Assembly from institutions that themselves have policies that prohibit fraternization between these students and their administrators/faculty. Because the Assembly recognizes its role in developing a mentor-student relationship, free from inappropriate interpersonal relationships, the Assembly, while not primarily an academic institution, seeks to impose analogous limitations on Members, staff, and student interns.

Accordingly, it is the policy of the New York State Assembly that Members of the Assembly and all Assembly employees are prohibited from engaging in personal relationships with student interns. "Personal relationships" include, but are not limited to, dating, romantic relationships or occurrences, sexual and/or otherwise intimate relationships, and also any relationship that would interfere with consistently professional, fair, and even-handed treatment of all student interns.

Additionally, student interns are prohibited from attending events at which alcohol is served, traveling with Members or other Assembly staff in private vehicles, traveling to district offices or to hearings not held in Albany, and dining with Members or Assembly staff outside of the office unless it is a meal to which all of an office's staff are invited and at which no one (Member, staff, or other guest) is served alcohol. For example, a student intern may attend an end of session dinner hosted by a Member of Assembly to which all of the Member's staff are invited and no alcohol is served. It is important to remember that the interns are students. Communications in person or by telephone or electronic device should only be conveyed during standard office hours. This policy is an effort to prevent favoritism, morale problems, disputes, misunderstandings, potential harassment claims, and inferences of impropriety with all student interns.

Alleged violations of this policy:

- (a) by Members shall be referred to the Assembly Committee on Ethics and Guidance for investigation by outside lawyers retained for that purpose and, if a determination is made that a violation has occurred, a recommendation for appropriate sanctions shall be made to the Speaker; sanctions may include the full panoply of sanctions available for recommendation by the Assembly Committee on Ethics and Guidance;
- (b) by employees shall be investigated by the outside lawyers who have been retained to investigate allegations of violations; the report of the outside lawyers shall be delivered to the Director of Human Resources and, if a determination is made that a violation has occurred, the Director of Human Resources, in consultation with the Assembly Intern Director and, as appropriate, the Minority Director of Administration and Personnel, shall impose any of the full range of employment sanctions consistent with other employment practices; and
- (c) by interns shall be investigated by the outside lawyers who have been retained to investigate allegations of violations; the report of the outside lawyers shall be delivered to the Director of Human Resources and, if a determination is made that a violation has occurred, upon consultation with the intern's college or university, the Assembly Intern Director, and, as appropriate, the Minority Director of Administration and Personnel, sanctions consistent with those set forth in the Intern Handbook shall be imposed.

Exemption: This policy shall not apply to personal relationships between Assembly employees and interns who have prior existing relationships as of the commencement of the internship. Provided, however, that anyone subject to this exemption shall notify the Office of Counsel to the Majority (x4191) with respect to the existence of this personal relationship prior to the commencement of the internship period.



CARL E. HEASTIE, SPEAKER

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