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OFFICE OF THE
BRIGADE COMMANDER

5 March 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE USU BRIGADE

SUBJECT: Brigade Commander's Policy Statement on Fraternization

Inappropriate relationships erode respect for authority, unit cohesion, and ultimately mission accomplishment. Whether through perceptions of favoritism or preferential treatment, the appearance of impropriety is a tremendously destructive force. Accordingly, it is the responsibility of each member of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) Brigade, to insure that fraternization is not tolerated at any level. Each member shares the responsibility for maintaining professional relationships. Relationships that violate this fundamental policy will be grounds for taking appropriate disciplinary action.

At its core, fraternization represents unduly familiar interpersonal conduct which, over time, may create the perception of favoritism. In short, it creates the existence of an atmosphere in which discipline is severely compromised. Fraternization pertains to a wide-range of relationships that could have an adverse impact upon good order and discipline. Unprofessional relationships can exist between officers, enlisted members, between officers and enlisted members, between students and staff, between military and civilian employees or contract personnel. Inappropriate relationships are unprofessional, whether pursued on or off duty.

In addition to the above, all four Services prohibit fraternization, a purely officer offense punishable under Article 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). See OPNAVINST 5370.2C, MCO 1000.9, AR 600-20, and AFI 36-2909. Violations of these regulations are a serious matter and subject the involved members to disciplinary action.

The focus of this policy is on the senior-subordinate relationship, and as such, is gender neutral. Professionally proper social interaction among officers, senior and junior enlisted members is completely authorized, for it not only enhances unit morale but it builds upon the good order and discipline which is a hallmark of a professional military environment. Relationships which are <u>not</u> based upon inherently professional motives, or those that are viewed as being unduly familiar, are entirely suspect and are contrary to expected norms of behavior. Accordingly, inappropriate relationships quickly undermine respect for authority and this in turn has the potential to severely impair the ability to successfully execute our mission.

Issues concerning fraternization should immediately be referred through the chain of command. If you have questions or concerns, I urge you to seek guidance from our Senior Services Advisors, Senior Enlisted Leader, Brigade Equal Opportunity Officer, or the Brigade Judge Advocate.

John M. Wempe
COL, MC, USA
Brigade Commander

Learning to Care for Those in Harm's Way