

Faculty, Staff and Graduation Gifts

It's the time of year for endings and beginnings: graduations, completion of training programs and board eligibility, and new jobs. Schools, departments and divisions celebrate with teachers, students and guests. Often a modest token of appreciation is given to a student or trainee by a faculty member.

What if you identify a special student or trainee you wish to honor with an individual gift? What guidelines should be used?

The Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine policies, Code of Conduct for residents, and the Compact Between Trainees and Their Teachers, address the conduct of educational relationships and professionalism but do not speak directly to the parameters of gift giving.

The State Code of Ethics applies to all employees, administrators and faculty members. The Code addresses specific limits on the value of gifts exchanged between supervisors and subordinates, including students and residents employed by UConn Health, for occasions such as birthdays or for a "major life event" such as a wedding. These limits are also appropriately applied to relationships between non-employed students/trainees and their teachers. Although graduation is certainly an important milestone for a student or trainee, it is not considered a major life event as defined by the Code of Ethics or UConn Health policy.

Using the available guidelines, we conclude the following: Gift-giving should be modest (valued at under \$100), non-coercive for students remaining in a training program (to avoid the student interpreting that a *quid pro quo* is expected), appropriate to a cordial professional relationship, and discreetly given.

For more information, please refer to UConn Health policy # 2003-34 [Gifts to Individuals](#) .

Questions about such gifts may be addressed to: the Office of Audit Compliance and Ethics 860-679-4180 or Paige Dunion, Academic Affairs and Education 860-679-2342.