

## Conflict of Interest Policy

### Policy Statement

#### I. OVERVIEW

All University employees are expected to perform their responsibilities diligently, legally, honestly and in good faith, putting the interests of the University first. Employees who have an actual or potential conflict of interest in performing their duties for the University must disclose the conflict in writing in a timely fashion, so that the University can determine how best to avoid or manage the conflict. Employees must be sensitive to situations that may pose a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest so that they are perceived at all times as objective, ethical, free from bias or undue influence, professional and fair in performing their duties.

A conflict of interest exists where an outside activity of the employee competes with or diminishes the interest of the University or interferes with the employee's performance of duties on behalf of the University. A conflict of interest also occurs when the outcome of a decision that should be made in the best interest of the University conflicts with the personal or economic interest of the employee. Among such decisions that may present conflicts are those determining or recommending the use of suppliers or vendors, the use of University resources, or the use of one's own work time.

To avoid a conflict of interest, employees must not be in a position of making or participating in the making of a decision as part of their University responsibilities if the personal or economic interest of themselves, members of their families or others with whom they have a personal relationship (including outside organizations) may be directly affected by the outcome. An employee may not participate, directly or indirectly, in decisions involving a benefit (such as employment, promotion, compensation, work assignments, supervision, other working conditions, or purchasing or use of goods, services or equipment) for those persons or entities in a personal relationship with the employee, including the following:

- A. Family members, defined as being a spouse, domestic partner, a person with whom the employee has an intimate relationship, persons related by blood, adoption or marriage to the employee (including children, grandchildren, parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews and their spouses), and persons residing in the same household,
- B. any company or other entity in which the employee or a family member has an ownership interest of 5% equity or \$10,000, whichever is less (excluding such interests held through mutual funds for which the individual has no control over

- the investment decisions of the fund), or any entity for which the employee serves as an officer, partner, director, or employee, and
- C. a company or entity with which the employee has a consulting or other business relationship and that seeks to do business with the University.

## II. SPECIFIC INSTANCES OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT

- A. Gifts and Gratuities. Employees should not accept any personal gifts, favors or hospitality that reasonably could be viewed as influencing their decision-making processes or compromise their judgment in actions affecting the University. Gifts of promotional items that are routinely distributed by vendors to customers and are of *de minimus* value may be accepted. Gratuities or gifts of money, cash equivalents or securities (other than those for the benefit of the University and processed according to University policies and procedures) may not be accepted at any time.
- B. Business Events and Meals. Employees may accept ordinary business courtesies, such as payment for a meal or an invitation to an event, if the value is reasonable and not excessive. If a vendor or supplier offers to pay for or reimburse an employee for an employee's reasonable costs of transportation, lodging and/or meals as part of the employee conducting University business, the employee should discuss the matter with the VP of Human Resources and the CAO to be sure that there is no actual or apparent conflict of interest in accepting such payment and whether it may be more prudent for the University to pay such expenses under all of the facts and circumstances. Even if such payments for travel for employees are appropriate, employees may not accept such payments for their family members or other traveling companions.
- C. Service on Outside Boards and with Outside Entities. Professional activities generally related to the employee's position at the University, such as participation in conferences, workshops or symposia as a speaker, organizer or attendee or participating in an advisory or visiting committee, would not ordinarily present a conflict of interest as long as such matters do not unreasonably detract from the employee's fulfilling his or her job duties or conflict with the University's objectives or goals. Consulting arrangements (with or without pay) or other outside business interests where there is a risk of an actual or potential conflict of interest must be disclosed in writing to, and discussed with, the employee's supervisor.

## III. POLICY PROCEDURES

- A. If an actual or potential conflict of interest arises, the employee must make an immediate written disclosure to the VP of Human Resources or the CAO. The supervisor and the employee will develop a written plan to manage or eliminate any conflict.
- B. Actual or potential conflicts involving the President, Provost or Vice Presidents shall be reported pursuant to the conflict of interest policy of the Board of Trustees and handled according to that policy.

This policy is meant to provide general guidance, but the existence of an actual or apparent conflict usually depends on the facts and circumstances of the particular

situation. Employees who have concerns about a conflict or potential conflict or are uncertain as to the impact or appearance of their activities should always consult with their supervisor and/or Human Resources for guidance.

Other University policies that govern or provide guidance on issues relating to conflicts of interest should also be consulted if applicable.

#### **IV. RELATED POLICIES**

Anti-Nepotism Policy

#### **V. DEFINITIONS**

Relationship – Relationship for purposes of this policy should be interpreted broadly. In considering whether a relationship falls within this policy, employees should disclose the facts in writing pursuant to this policy and seek guidance.