



Angelo State University Operating Policy and Procedure

OP 02.09: Conflict of Interest and Commitment

DATE: April 18, 2013

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to provide guidelines on Texas Tech University's System's (TTUS) and Angelo State University's conflict of interest policies and to protect the ethical and civic responsibilities of the university and its mission.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed by August of odd-numbered years by the Office of the President and the Office of the General Counsel with recommended revisions forwarded to the president by September 15 of the same year.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

Employees of Angelo State University are entrusted with protecting the safety and welfare of the public's trust. It is state law that university employees may not have direct or indirect interests, including financial and other interests, engage in business transactions or professional activities, or incur any obligation of any nature that is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of the employee's duties to the university or the public interest. Employees shall avoid acts which are improper or give the appearance of impropriety. The principles and guidelines contained in this policy shall apply to university employees, regardless of rank or position. See [Texas Government Code Chapter 572](#) and [Regents' Rule 03.01](#).

All employees are expected to (i) abide by the university's conflict of interest and commitment policies and standards, (ii) fully and continually disclose professional and relevant personal activities and relationships that create a conflict of interest or commitment or have the appearance of creating a conflict of interest or commitment, (iii) remedy conflicts of interest or commitment and/or comply with any management or monitoring plan prescribed by the university, (iv) remain aware of the potential for conflicts of interest and commitment, and (v) take initiative to manage, disclose, or resolve conflicts of interest or commitment as appropriate.

All senior administrators have the responsibility to understand and implement this policy, including, as necessary, the adoption of specific procedures for their respective schools and departments in furtherance of and in accordance with this policy.

1. Definitions

- a. *Benefit:* A benefit is anything reasonably regarded as pecuniary gain or pecuniary advantage, including benefit to any other person in whose welfare the employee has a direct and substantial interest. See [Regents' Rule 03.01.04](#). Pecuniary gain or advantage includes monetary, financial or economic gain or advantage.

- b. *Business*: Business refers to any company or corporation, any partnership, sole proprietorship, firm, franchise, association, organization, holding company, joint stock company, receivership, trust (business, real estate, estate planning, or otherwise), enterprise, or any other legal entity whether organized for profit or not-for-profit, including any entity controlled by, controlling, or under common control with any such entity, but excluding TTUS or any of its constituent entities.
- c. *Conflict of Interest*: A conflict of interest refers to a situation in which an employee's financial, professional, or other personal considerations may directly or indirectly affect, or have the appearance of affecting, the employee's judgment in exercising any duty or responsibility, including the conduct or reporting of research, owed to the university.
- d. *Conflict of Commitment*: A conflict of commitment refers to a situation where an employee engages in external activities, either paid or unpaid, that interfere with the employee's obligation and commitment to the university. Employees should evaluate and arrange their external interests in order to avoid compromising their ability to carry out their obligations to the university. A conflict of commitment occurs whenever an employee's outside activities exceed the permitted limits or whenever an employee's professional loyalty is not to the university.
- e. *Consensual Relationship*: A consensual relationship is a mutually acceptable affectional, intimate, romantic, or sexual relationship between two or more individuals.
- f. *Employee*: An employee is anyone who receives a W-2 from the university, including temporary, part-time or full-time faculty and staff.
- g. *Family Member*: For purposes of this policy, family members include the employee's:
 - (1) Relatives related within the first degree of affinity (by marriage) which include the employee's husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, step-sons, step-daughters, step-mother-in-law, and step-father-in-law.
 - (2) Relatives related within the second degree of affinity (by marriage) which includes the employee's sisters-in-law (brother's spouse or spouse's sister), brothers-in-law (sister's spouse or spouse's brother), spouse's grandmothers and step-grandmothers, spouse's grandfathers and step-grandfathers, spouse's granddaughters and step-granddaughters, and spouse's grandson's and step-grandson's.
 - (3) Relatives related within the first degree of consanguinity (by blood) which include the employee's mother, father, sons and daughters.
 - (4) Relatives related within the second degree of consanguinity (by blood) which include the employee's brothers, sisters, grandmothers, grandfathers, grandsons, and granddaughters.
 - (5) Relatives related within the third degree of consanguinity (by blood) which include the employee's great-grandfathers, great-grandmothers, aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, great-grandsons and great-granddaughters.

- h. *Financial Interest:* A financial interest includes, but is not limited to:
- (1) Anything of monetary value, including, but not limited to, salary or other payments for services, fees, honoraria, “gifts,” or other “in kind” compensation whether for consulting, membership on a board of directors or advisory board, or any other purpose such as partial, interim, or milestone payments.
 - (2) Intellectual property rights including, but not limited, to patents, copyrights, and royalty income or the right to receive future royalties under a patent or other intellectual property rights, whether pursuant to a license or otherwise.
 - (3) Ownership and equity interests or entitlement to such interests in a publicly or non-publicly traded business, including, but not limited to, stock, stock options, partnership interests, and convertible debt. It does not include interests in publicly traded diversified mutual funds where the individual investor has no control over the selection of holdings.

What must be disclosed as either a significant or material financial interest will be governed by the particular policy governing that area.

- i. *Health Care Vendor:* A health care vendor is any individual or company that sells or markets health care services or items to the university and/or its patients, including, but not limited to, pharmaceutical companies and their representatives, device or durable medical equipment (DME) manufacturers and their representatives, and equipment and/or service providers and their representatives.
- j. *Material Financial Interest:* Pursuant to [Regents’ Rule 03.04.3](#) and [Texas Government Code 572.005](#), a financial interest is presumed to be material if it entails:
- (1) Any ownership or investment interest in a business entity (including stock, options, a partnership interest, or any other ownership or investment interest) valued at more than \$10,000, except equity in a publicly traded company amounting to less than 10% ownership interest in the company;
 - (2) A controlling interest in a business entity;
 - (3) Receipt of non-dividend compensation (including salary, consulting fees, royalty payments, or other remuneration) of more than \$10,000 in any 12-month period in the past three (3) years, or the expectation of such compensation in the future;
 - (4) Any ownership interest in real property, personal property, intellectual property or any other interest valued at \$10,000 or more;
 - (5) A position of real or apparent authority in an outside entity such as director, officer, trustee, partner, agent, controlling shareholder, shareholder with more than 10% voting interest, or a direct or indirect participating interest in any shares, stock or otherwise, regardless of whether voting rights are included, in more than 10% of the profits, proceeds or capital gains of the entity involved; or
 - (6) Any position as an employee of the entity involved.

- k. *Outside Employment*: Pursuant to [Regents' Rule 03.07.1](#), outside employment means any compensated service or employment of a university employee by an entity other than the TTU System.
- l. *Significant Financial Interest*: On occasion there may be a reference to significant financial interest as opposed to a material financial interest. In those instances, see Section 2.g. below.

2. Conflict of Interest Guidelines

a. General Provisions

Conflicts of interest may arise under many circumstances. Employees shall not use their public offices for private gain and shall act impartially, not giving any preferential treatment to any private or public organization or individual. See [Regents' Rule 03.01.2 \(c\) and \(d\)](#).

In addition to the *Regents' Rules*, state law sets forth certain standards of conduct, the violation of which may result in termination of the employee's employment, as well as civil and criminal penalties. In compliance with these state mandated standards of conduct, employees shall not:

- (1) Accept or solicit any gift, favor, or service that might reasonably tend to influence the employee in the discharge of official duties or that the employee knows or should know is being offered with the intent to influence the employee's official conduct;
- (2) Accept other employment or engage in a business or professional activity that the employee might reasonably expect would require or induce the employee to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of the employee's position;
- (3) Accept other appointments, employment, or compensation that could reasonably be expected to impair the employee's independence of judgment in the performance of the employee's official duties;
- (4) Make personal investments that could reasonably be expected to create a substantial conflict between the employee's private interest and the interest of the university; or
- (5) Intentionally or knowingly solicit, accept, or agree to accept any benefit for having exercised the employee's official powers or performed the employee's official duties in favor of another.

See [Texas Government Code 572.051 \(a\)](#).

b. University Administration

The administration of the university may present the potential for conflicts of interest. Employees with administrative responsibilities must take particular care to avoid relationships in which financial interests or personal interests conflict with the university's interests and create the potential for inappropriate factors to be considered in administrative decisions. In particular, those who have institutional duties involving the

procurement, exchange, or sale of goods, services, or other assets; the negotiation or formation of contracts or other commitments affecting the assets or interests of the university; the making of hiring decisions; the handling of confidential or privileged information; the provision of patient or client services; the conduct of sponsored research and the handling of any research results or resulting transfer of technology; or the rendition of professional advice to the university must be particularly conscious of potential conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest.

c. Business Relationships

In general, when employees or their family members have financial interests in a business or are involved in a business as an owner, operator, or as an executive officer, they must be alert to the possibility that a conflict of interest may arise if the business has a relationship with the university. If the enterprise does business with the university or proposes to do business with the university, the employee is required to disclose that fact. Employees may not review, approve, or administratively control contracts or business relationships when the contract or business relationship is between the university and a business in which the employee or his/her family member has a material financial interest.

This section is not intended to apply to the adoption of textbooks, software, or other teaching aids written by faculty members or their family members for use in their own course of instruction, which is addressed in [OP 76.01 Copyright Ownership and Administration](#).

d. Use of Private Consultants

Approval of consulting agreements must be in accordance with [Regents' Rule 07.12.2](#).

Any employee who has actual knowledge that a family member is seeking a consulting relationship with the university shall disclose the relationship to the department seeking the consultant's services, and the university's procurement and/or contracting department.

Likewise, entities or individuals who seek to provide consulting services to the university shall be required to disclose any family member relationship to the university and the department receiving the services.

e. Benefits, Gifts and Honoraria

- (1) General Concept. No benefits, gifts or accommodations of any nature, including unrestricted grants, may be solicited, offered, or accepted by the university or its employees when to do so would place them in a prejudicial or compromising position, interfere in any way with the impartial discharge of their official duties to the university, interfere with the exercise of their official powers, result in performance of official duties in favor of another or reflect adversely on their integrity or that institution. See [Regents' Rule 03.01.1\(a\) and \(e\)](#); [Regents' Rule 03.01.4](#).

All gifts given in support of an institutional mission must be directed through the Office of Development and Alumni Relations.

There are limited situations where employees may accept gifts and benefits without violating conflict of interest rules. These include acceptance of:

- (a) Gifts or other benefits from family, friends and business relationships unrelated to their official status with the university and not offered in exchange for official action or decision. See [Regents' Rule 03.04.1\(d\)](#);
- (b) A fee prescribed by law to be received by public servants or any other benefit to which the employee is lawfully entitled for which he/she gives legitimate consideration in a capacity other than as a public servant;
- (c) Gift, award or memento from a lobbyist who is required to make reports under state law;
- (d) Plaques and similar recognition awards; and
- (e) Items having a value of less than \$50, not including cash or negotiable instruments. See [Regents' Rule 03.04.01](#).

However, even in the situations set forth above, the employee may be required to disclose such gift or benefit as required by federal or state law or university policy.

Furthermore and notwithstanding the \$50 limit above, health care providers and their staff may not accept gifts of benefits of any amount from health care vendors.

An employee who receives an unsolicited benefit that he or she is prohibited from accepting may donate the benefit to a governmental entity that has the authority to accept the gift or may donate the benefit to a recognized tax-exempt charitable organization formed for educational, religious, or scientific purposes. See [Regents' Rule 03.04.1\(b\)](#).

(2) *Food, Lodging, Transportation and Entertainment.*

- (a) Generally, employees may not accept food, lodging, transportation, or entertainment from those who may be interested in or become interested in a contract, purchase, payment, claim, decision, or transaction involving the exercise of that employee's discretion.
- (b) Employees of the Office of Development and Alumni Relations may accept food, lodging, transportation, or entertainment from those who may be interested in or become interested in a contract, purchase, payment, claim, decision, or transaction involving the exercise of that employee's discretion only when the person or representative of the entity providing the food, lodging, transportation, or entertainment is present at the time the food, lodging, transportation, or entertainment is received or enjoyed by the employee. See [Regents' Rule 03.01.4\(c\)](#). Any such acceptance of food, lodging, transportation or entertainment must be for the benefit of the university.
- (c) Employees who file annual disclosure statements with the Texas Ethics Commission pursuant to Texas Government Code 572.021 or university policy are required to report any such benefits valued at over \$250 received in a year, in

the aggregate. Employees who do not file an annual disclosure statement must report such benefits to their immediate supervisor.

- (d) Employees may never accept gifts or entertainment from health care vendors and may accept only food, lodging and transportation from health care vendors under limited circumstances.
- (3) *Honoraria.* Employees may not solicit, accept, or agree to accept an honorarium in consideration for services they would not have been asked to provide, but for their official position or duties as an employee of the university. This prohibition includes a request for or acceptance of a payment made to a third party if made in exchange for such services. Employees may accept the direct provision of or reimbursement for expenses for transportation and lodging incurred in connection with a speaking engagement at a conference or similar event. Meals provided as a part of the event or reimbursement for actual expenses for meals may also be accepted. Participation in the event by the employee must be more than perfunctory. See [Regents' Rule 03.01.4\(f\)](#).

f. Use and Appropriation of University Assets

Employees shall protect and conserve the university's property and shall not use it for anything other than authorized activities. See [Regents' Rule 03.01.2](#).

The university possesses both tangible and intangible assets which are state property. These assets include buildings, personnel, equipment, patents, copyrights, technology, trademarks, and work products, confidential and privileged information, as well as the university's reputation and prestige. As custodian of these assets, employees owe a fiduciary duty to the university to act in accordance with applicable university policies and procedures regarding the proper expenditure of the university's funds, as well as the use and control of university assets. Employees are always expected to protect the best interests of the university pertaining to its assets.

Conduct constituting the misappropriation or unauthorized use of the university's assets in connection with any external activity is prohibited, including implying sponsorship or endorsement by the university or otherwise trading on the reputation or goodwill of the university. Mere identification of the university as one's employer and of one's position at the university is permitted, provided that such identification is not used to imply the university's sponsorship or endorsement.

g. Research Activities

Conflicts of interest in research involve situations in which financial, professional, or other personal considerations may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, an individual's judgment in the design, conduct, or reporting of research. The bias that may result from such conflicts of interest may affect not only the collection, analysis, or interpretation of data, but also the hiring of staff, procurement of materials, subcontracting, clinical referrals, sharing of results, choice of protocol, statistical methods, or use of human participants, or may otherwise influence the course or outcome of a research project.

Employees of the university may not review, approve, or administratively control contracts, grants, clinical trials, or other research collaborations when such contract, grant, clinical trial, or other collaboration pertains to a research project involving the university and a business or intellectual property in which the employee or a family member has a significant financial interest as defined by the university's policy [OP 56.08 Disclosure of Significant Financial Interests that may Represent Conflicts of Interest](#) when the employee or family member is an employee or owner of the business and directly involved with activities pertaining to the research project.

No research with human subjects that involves a conflict of interest may receive final approval from the Institutional Review Board until the conflict of interest is addressed under applicable policy. Among the options for managing such a conflict is prohibiting the employee from involvement in the research. See [OP 56.03 Protection of Human Subjects in Research](#) and [OP 56.08 Disclosure of Significant Financial Interests that may Represent Conflicts of Interest](#).

For research regulated by federal or state agencies there may be conflict of interest requirements that apply to the sponsor of the study and/or the investigators. Employees of the university shall comply with all applicable regulatory requirements pertaining to conflict of interest whether the employee is the investigator or the sponsor or both.

Every employee participating or involved in research on behalf of the university is responsible for learning and complying with all applicable policies and procedures.

h. Health Care Vendor Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest in healthcare industry sponsored activities involve situations in which financial, professional, or other personal considerations may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, an individual's judgment in the provision of patient care, procurement, or other professional activities. The bias which may result from such conflicts of interest may affect procurement of equipment, clinical referrals, choice of treatment, or otherwise influence the provision of patient care or the execution of one's professional duties. As such, employees shall not accept gifts or other benefits from health care vendors, except as allowed by the university's policies.

i. Intellectual Property Rights

While it is the policy of the TTUS Board of Regents to encourage scholarly activity without regard to potential gains from royalties and other forms of income, employees are subject to their obligations and those of TTUS under grants, contracts, and research agreements with governmental agencies and sponsors. Additionally all intellectual property will be handled in accordance with the university's policies to avoid conflicts of interests. See [Regents' Rule, Chapter 10](#) and [OP 56.10 Intellectual Property Rights](#).

j. Academic, Supervisory, Teaching, or Evaluative Relationships

Employees shall avoid academic, supervisory, teaching, or evaluative relationships with other employees that pose actual or perceived conflicts of interest from the standpoint of personal or professional connections. If questions arise as to the propriety of such relationships, the department chair or appropriate dean or vice president shall be consulted. See [OP 06.22 Conflict of Interest](#).

Employees must not direct or serve on committees that evaluate other employees where such service poses a conflict of interest or creates the appearance thereof. Such committees include periodic staff evaluations, promotion, or other employment decisions or actions and annual, third year, or tenure evaluations.

k. Activities Related to Students

It is the university's policy that employees with direct teaching, training, supervisory, advisory, evaluative, or other academic responsibility over students recognize and respect the ethical and professional boundaries that must exist in such situations.

An employee may not assign students or other trainees to university projects sponsored by any business if the employee or their family member has a material financial interest in the business. An employee may not assign students or permit students to participate in any consulting relationship in which the employee or a family member has a material financial interest.

An employee who supervises a student in an outside (non-university) employment relationship should not direct that student's research, permit the enrollment of the student in her/his courses or other organized instructional activity, or supervise the student as a grader for a course taught by the employee. In the rare event that departmental requirements necessitate that an employee who has an outside employment relationship with a student (either as supervisor, employer, or employee) supervise a student as a teaching assistant, the chair or unit head must exercise direct oversight of that relationship for its duration. Similarly, if specialized research requirements require that an employee who has an outside employment relationship with a student (either as supervisor, employer, or employee) supervise a student as a research assistant, the chair or unit head must exercise direct oversight of that relationship for its duration.

Employees must not direct or serve on committees that evaluate a family member or someone with whom they have a consensual relationship. Such committees include thesis, dissertation, or preliminary, comprehensive, or qualifying examination committees, or other periodic evaluations. Students may not enroll in courses offered by their parents, spouses, or others with whom they have a consensual relationship without the written approval of the appropriate dean.

Deans and department chairs have the responsibility for protecting the interests of students and trainees who may be directly or indirectly involved in a conflict of interest situation related to an employee or family member with a material financial interest in the situation. Students and other trainees should not be permitted to participate in consulting activities if the terms and conditions of those activities would prevent them from meeting applicable degree or training requirements. Students and other trainees involved in any conflict of interest situation should be informed of the conflict of interest and the existence of a management plan and notified that their concerns, if any, can be discussed with the appropriate university official.

Faculty shall not charge a fee for tutoring any student enrolled in the faculty member's classes or engage in other activities that present the appearance of a conflict of interest. See [OP 06.03 Tutoring for Payment](#).

1. Consensual Relationships – Faculty and Students

Consensual relationships between faculty and students in a faculty member's class or with whom the faculty member has an academic or instructional connection ARE PROHIBITED. Should such a relationship develop, the faculty member has the obligation to disclose the existence of the relationship to his or her immediate supervisor, cease the relationship, and cooperate in making alternative arrangements for teaching, training, advising, or supervising the student involved. Pre-existing consensual relationships shall be disclosed to and managed by the faculty member's chair, dean, and provost, as applicable.

m. Activities Related to Family Members

Whenever an appointment is made, either on a full- or part-time basis, it shall be made on the basis of the qualifications and suitability of the appointee, subject to applicable statutes and the university's policies. See [Regents' Rule 03.01.8](#).

No family member related to an administrator shall be eligible for initial appointment to a position over which that administrator has appointment authority, regardless of the source of funds from which the position's salary is to be paid, unless the Board of Regents approves such appointment and the administrator has no supervisory authority over the family member. See [Regents' Rule 03.01.8](#).

No employee may approve, recommend, or otherwise take action with regard to the appointment, reappointment, promotion, salary, supervision, or other employment action of a family member. See [Regents' Rule 03.01.8](#) and [OP 52.26 Nepotism](#).

3. Conflict of Commitment Guidelines

Another type of conflict of interest is conflict of commitment. A conflict of commitment relates to an individual's distribution of effort between employment or faculty appointment at the University and commitment to external business activities or employment, external professional activities, or personal activities. It is possible to have a conflict of commitment, even if the individual does not receive compensation for the external activity. External activities may include outside employment, involvement with professional societies, participation related to review panels, professional meetings, community service, conferences, consulting, other professional activities, and business activities related to outside entities including start-up companies.

It is the policy of the university that all full-time employees, whether faculty or staff, shall devote their primary professional activities, loyalty, time, and energy to their position for the university. Part-time employee shall devote their primary activities, loyalty, time, and energy to their position while performing duties for the university. An employee's primary responsibility is the full and complete execution of all assigned duties, the fulfillment of professional obligations not ordinarily reduced to written assignment, and maintenance of current professional skills.

Outside employment must be compatible with the interests of the university and TTUS and of such a nature that it will not detract from the effectiveness and performance of the employee. See [Regents' Rule 03.07.01](#), [OP 52.31 Outside and Dual Employment](#), and [OP 06.17 Other Employment, Faculty, Consulting, and Public Offices](#).

An employee shall not engage in any external activity that the employee might reasonably expect would require or induce him/her to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of their employment at the university. See [Regents' Rule 03.01.1\(b\)](#).

An employee shall not engage in any external activity that could reasonably be expected to impair the employee's independent judgment in the performance of his/her official duties for the university. See [Regents' Rule 03.01.1\(c\)](#).

Although a specific work-week may not be defined for all full-time exempt employees, whether faculty or staff, it is expected that such positions constitute a full-time obligation and that, with the exceptions explicitly permitted by the university's policies on external activities, they will not engage in other employment. See [OP 52.31 Outside and Dual Employment](#) and [OP 06.17 Other Employment, Faculty, Consulting, and Public Offices](#).

All employees shall disclose and discuss with their supervisor any external activities that could create a conflict of commitment, or the appearance of a conflict of commitment, to ensure proper management of any potential conflict.

External activities must be arranged so as not to interfere with the employee's commitments to the university. External activities must not discredit the university nor compromise any intellectual property of the university. Employees should periodically re-examine the nature and extent of their external activities and conscientiously avoid engaging in activities that constitute conflicts of commitment.

Employees who are members of their school's income plan are required to follow the plan bylaws regarding income-generating activity.

External activities of employees must not detract from primary responsibilities and must not require such extensive absence so as to cause the employee to neglect his/her university obligations. In the case of faculty, such obligations include, but are not limited to, instructional obligations, research obligations, and availability to students and colleagues.

Individual colleges and departments may implement more specific procedures and require additional information in furtherance of this policy.

4. Disclosure

a. Duty to Disclose Internally

In order to identify and review actual or perceived conflicts of interest or commitment, employees must disclose in advance all external activities and financial interests that create or have the appearance of creating conflicts of interest or commitment to their supervisor or the appropriate university officials as outlined in policy. The supervisor or the appropriate university officials will review the disclosures to determine whether a conflict of interest or commitment exists and what conditions or restrictions, if any, should be imposed in order to manage, reduce or eliminate the conflict of interest or commitment. The supervisor or the appropriate university official shall document any such disclosure and/or related decisions.

Such disclosures shall be sufficiently detailed and timely as to allow accurate and objective evaluation prior to making commitments or initiating activities that create

conflicts of interest or commitment. Each employee has an obligation to cooperate fully in the review of the pertinent facts and circumstances. Individual schools and departments may implement more specific procedures and require additional information in furtherance of this policy.

Certain activities on behalf of the university may involve more specific procedures with respect to disclosure of conflicts of interest or commitment because of governmental or legal requirements. Anyone involved with sponsored research or the development and licensing of intellectual property under the auspices of the university is responsible for complying with all applicable procedures.

b. Duty to Disclose Externally

Employees shall comply with financial disclosure requirements of any governmental, accreditation, or other self-regulatory agency.

Additionally, disclosures of actual or perceived conflicts of interest or commitment shall be made to publications and journal editors when research manuscripts are submitted and to the audience during any oral presentation of research.

The Office of the President is available as a resource for questions involving the university's policies and procedures and for guidance on any issues related to the disclosure process.

c. Annual Disclosure Process

In addition to the duty of advance disclosure discussed above, executive administrators as defined in [Regents' Rule 03.04](#) and others as required by policy shall provide a written disclosure of situations or relationships that create or have the appearance of creating a conflict of interest or commitment upon initial employment and annually thereafter. Additionally, at a minimum, all faculty employees as well as employees of the following offices must provide a written disclosure of external activities and financial interests annually: student financial aid, procurement, contracting, commercialization/technology, and regulatory oversight committees. The president may identify others of which annual disclosure will also be required. Individuals who must disclose must also provide updated disclosures throughout the year if changes in circumstances arise that either (a) create a new conflict of interest or commitment, or (b) change or eliminate a conflict of interest or commitment previously disclosed.

Disclosure statements will be considered confidential and only released in accordance with federal or state law.

5. Conflict Committees

a. The University's Conflict of Interest/Commitment Committee (Non-Research)

(1) Duties and Responsibilities

The university shall establish a standing Conflict of Interest Committee. This committee shall:

- (a) Serve as a resource on individual conflict of interest or commitment matters not otherwise addressed by the University's Research Conflict of Interest Committee or other established review procedures.
- (b) Conduct a thorough review of conflict of interest or commitment matters brought before it.
- (c) Approve or deny the proposed activity and develop an appropriate management plan to address any conflicts.
- (d) Report annually to the Board of Regents Audit Committee through the Office of Audit Services, summarizing the matters considered during the year by the committee and their resolution(s).

The committee shall also maintain an ongoing awareness of procedures, practices, and standards and laws with regard to conflicts of interest with a view to assuring consistency with the terms of this policy. It shall carry on whatever dialogue is necessary with deans and directors or administrative officers to insure that its knowledge is sufficiently current and complete. It shall also insure that a proper balance is maintained between confidentiality and its operations and standards.

(2) Composition

This committee shall consist of representatives appointed by the president from relevant areas across the university, such as faculty, legal, finance, administration, or compliance. The president shall appoint the chair of the committee. The committee shall appoint at least one member with specialized knowledge in any area under review by the committee.

b. TTUS Institutional Conflict of Interest Committee

In the event of an institutional conflict of interest involving any component of TTUS, an ad-hoc Conflict of Interest Committee shall be convened by the TTUS General Counsel.

(1) Duties & Responsibilities

The committee is responsible for reviewing all conflict of interest cases involving the institution as a party.

This committee shall:

- (a) Conduct a thorough review of each case brought before it.
- (b) Approve or deny the proposed activity and develop an appropriate management plan to address any conflicts.
- (c) Report annually to the Board of Regents Audit Committee through the Office of Audit Services, summarizing the matters considered during the year by the committee and their resolution(s).

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(2) Composition

The TTUS General Counsel shall appoint members with expertise relevant to the matter under review by the committee.

6. Oversight & Resources

The president shall ensure education is provided to new employees and that there are annual communication and/or awareness activities.

Employees may find additional information regarding conflicts of interest for state employees and/or obtain an opinion from the [Texas Ethics Commission](#).

Employees should report any violations of this policy or related conflicts of interest policies through the TTUS Compliance Hotline either toll free at 1-866-294-9352 or [online](#).