

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM

BOARD OF REGENTS

AUDIT & COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICIES
OF THE
BOARD OF REGENTS AND EACH OF THE UNIVERSITIES
FY 2022

University of Houston System
Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policies
Summary

December 2, 2021

The Board of Regents Audit and Compliance Committee Charter and Checklist, item number 23, requires the Audit and Compliance Committee to conduct an annual review of the ethics and conflict of interest policies of the Board and each of the universities to ensure that the Board of Regents and each of the institutions have Conflict of Interest Policies in place. The policies include Code of Ethics/Ethical Conduct of Employees and Conflicts of Interest. In addition to their own policies, all institutions also refer to the Texas Ethics Commission “Guide to Ethics Laws for State Officers and Employees.”

These policies provide guidelines to avoid conflicts of interest, generally described as the use of one’s university employment or position to obtain unauthorized privileges, benefits, or things of value for oneself or others. Standards of conduct for employees must also be maintained to fulfill their responsibility to the public in the performance of their official duties. These policies set forth a code of accountability for component university employees in the performance of university responsibilities, identify areas of legal and ethical concern, and specify requirements for compliance with state laws, federal guidelines, Board of Regents policies, standards of ethics, and good business practices.

The changes to the policies since they were last reviewed by the Audit and Compliance Committee on December 3, 2020 include:

Board of Regents

- “Housekeeping changes” throughout the policy to modify the pronouns to be gender neutral and to delete the term “component university.”

University of Houston System

- SAM 02.A.09 (Conflict of Interest) incorporated “housekeeping changes” throughout the policy effective 10/7/21 to modify the pronouns to be gender neutral and to delete the term “component university.”
- SAM 02.A.29 (Ethical Conduct of Employees) incorporated legal changes to Section 4.9 effective 05/27/21 by adding the phrase “and duties for the local office” and deleting the phrase: “and so long as the office does not involve a political party primary or a party affiliation” and housekeeping changes throughout to delete the term “component university.”
- Policy on Conflict of Interest in Research - No updates or changes were made.

University of Houston

- No updates or changes were made.

University of Houston-Downtown

- PS 05.C.07, Code of Conduct – Procurement Responsibilities reaffirmed 2/21/2020
- PS 06.A.07, revised 2/12/2020. Title changed from **Ethical Conduct in Research and Government-Sponsored Activities** to Misconduct in Research, Scholarly, Creative, and Government Sponsored Activities to more accurately reflect the scope of the policy. The policy now requires that faculty annually declare and/or reaffirm what constitutes bona fide contributions to research/scholarship that warrants authorship; the policy now requires the use of an Inquiry Team rather than a single individual carrying out inquiries; the duration of inquiries is now more flexible to account for the potential complexity of an allegation; the Provost now has more time between the end of an inquiry and the initiation of an investigation; the duration of investigations is now more flexible to account for the potential complexity of an allegation; all inquiry and investigation interviews must now be recorded; the Provost now has more time between the end of an investigation and determining whether misconduct has occurred and the issuance of any sanctions; a 30-day deadline has been added to appeals to the UHD President; and additional references have been added to the policy.

University of Houston-Clear Lake

- ~~ULC1998.004 – Consulting and Outside Employment (12/11/08)~~
- ~~LRRC2005.001 – Procedure on Conflicts of Interest for Investigators (03/10/05)~~
- ~~10.2.4 – Research Ethics Policy and Procedures (June 1998)~~
- ~~Annual Certification of Compliance for Investigators FY 2020~~
- ~~ULC1997.010 – Nepotism (12/10/09)~~
- MAP 02.A.08 - Consulting and Paid Professional Service (dated 6/18/2021) – New policy developed to based on SAM 02.A.08 (Consulting and Paid Professional Service) to prescribe the regulations to be followed to ensure compliance with Board Policy 57.02, Consulting and Paid Professional Service, as well as state laws, and to assist the employee in managing or eliminating potential conflicts.
- MAP 02.A.09 Conflict of Interest (dated 6/18/2021) – New policy developed based on SAM 02.A.09 (Conflict of Interest) to present requirements to avoid conflicts of interest in accordance with Texas Government Code Section 572.051, Texas Education Code Section 51.9337, and Board of Regents Policies, including 57.01, 57.02, 57.04, 57.05 and 57.08
- MAP 02.A.21 – Nepotism (dated 07/09/2021) – New policy developed based on SAM 02.A.21 (Nepotism) to set forth policy on nepotism, and requires compliance with State of Texas statutes, Board of Regents Policy 57.07, and regulations regarding unfair employment practices due to nepotism.

- SAM 02.A.29 – Ethical Conduct of Employees (revised May 27, 2021) – This policy is listed and referenced in our UHCL Policies, Standards and Guidelines as the Ethics Policy.

University of Houston-Victoria

- No changes or updates were made.

FY 2022
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM
ETHICS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICIES
As of **September 30, 2021**
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The Board of Regents Audit Committee Charter and Checklist, item number 23, requires the Audit Committee to conduct an annual review of the ethics and conflict of interest policies of the Board and each of the universities. The following policies are attached for this review, noting in parenthesis the date of last update:

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Board of Regents

4	57.01	Code of Ethics (08/24/17)
8	57.08	Conflicts of Interest (08/24/17)
7		Board of Regents Conflict of Interest Certification FY 2021-2022

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9	SAM 02.A.09	Conflict of Interest 10/07/21
11	SAM 02.A.29	Ethical Conduct of Employees (05/27/21)

University of Houston

20	MAPP 02.04.07	Ethical Conduct of University Employees (Reviewed 09/2/19)
28		UH Research Policy on Conflict of Interest in Research (January 2016 & April 2016)

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43	05.C.07	Code of Conduct – Procurement Responsibilities (09/16/14) (Reaffirmed 2/21/2020)
47	06.A.03	Standards of Conduct in Government-Sponsored Research (08/17/15)
50	06.A.04	Procurement Integrity Policy (08/17/15)
50	06.A.07	Misconduct in Research, Scholarly, Creative and Government Sponsored Activities (2/12/2020)

University of Houston-Clear Lake

55	ULC1998.004	Consulting and Outside Employment (12/11/08)
58	LRRC2005.001	Procedure on Conflicts of Interest for Investigators (03/10/05)
62	10.2.4	Research Ethics Policy and Procedures (June 1998)
66		Annual Certification of Compliance for Investigators FY 2020
68	ULC1997.010	Nepotism (12/10/09)
59	MAP 02.A.08	Consulting and Paid Professional Service (dated 6/18/2021)
62	MAP 02.A.09	Conflict of Interest (dated 6/18/2021)
65	MAP 02.A.21	Nepotism (dated 07/09/2021)
67	SAM 02.A.29	Ethical Conduct of Employees (revised May 27, 2021)

University of Houston-Victoria

74	C-8	Employee Standards of Conduct (policy also addresses Conflicts of Interest) (04/23/19)
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- 84 C-8 Supplement Financial Aid Employee Standards of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Certification [undated]
- 85 E-7 Related Party Disclosures (12/14/17)

BOARD OF REGENTS POLICIES

57.01 Code of Ethics [<http://uhsystem.edu/board-of-regents/policies/index.php#SectionVI>]

- 57.01.1 All members of the Board and all employees of the System and its component universities shall adhere to the highest ethical standards of conduct reflected in state law and Board policies.
- 57.01.2 The System code of ethics is comprised of the following components:
 - A. Statutory Standards of Conduct for State Employees, Section 572.051, Texas Government Code;
 - B. the following Board policies:
 - 1. Academic Freedom (21.03)
 - 2. Sexual Harassment (29.02)
 - 3. Governmental Appearances (81.01)
 - 4. Consulting and Paid Professional Service (57.02)
 - 5. Dual Office Holding (57.04)
 - 6. Nepotism (57.07)
 - 7. Conflicts of Interest (57.08)
- 57.01.3 All members of the Board and employees of the System and its component universities shall be furnished a copy of the laws and policies comprising the code of ethics at the time of employment or commencement of service and at the start of each academic year and shall receive training on such laws and policies.
- 57.01.4 All members of the Board shall annually sign conflict of interest certification statements affirming their compliance with their official oath and specific provisions of Texas statutes related to ethical behavior.
- 57.01.5 Each officer or employee of the System and of the component universities is expected to obey all federal, state, and local laws and is subject to disciplinary action for a violation of those laws.

(Policy last reviewed 08/24/2017)

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

Texas Government Code § 572.051 – *Standards of Conduct; State Agency Ethics Policy*

Texas Education Code § 51.9337 – *Purchasing Authority Conditional: Required Standards*

UH System Board of Regents Policy 57.08 – *Conflicts of Interest*

System Administrative Memoranda (SAMs)

02.A.09 – *Conflict of Interest*

02.A.29 – *Ethical Conduct of Employees*

57.08 Conflicts of Interest

[<http://www.uhsystem.edu/board-of-regents/policies/index.php#SectionVI>]

All members of the Board and employees of the System and its component universities shall adhere to and be furnished a copy of the Statutory Standards of Conduct for State Employees, Section 572.051, Texas Government Code, and shall avoid conflicts of interest, generally described as the use of one's University employment or position to obtain

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unauthorized privileges, benefits, or things of value for oneself or others, including the following:

- 57.08.1 No Board member or employee shall solicit, engage, or agree to accept any privilege, benefit or thing of value for the exercise of his/her discretion, influence, or powers as an employee or regent, except as is allowed by law.
- 57.08.2 No Board member or employee shall accept any privilege, benefit, or thing of value that might tend to influence **him/her** in the discharge of his/her duties as an employee or regent.
- 57.08.3 No Board member or employee shall use his/her position to secure special privileges or exemptions for **himself/herself** or others, except as is allowed by law.
- 57.08.4 No Board member or employee may be an officer, agent, employee, or member of, or own an interest in a professional activity that foreseeably might require or induce him or her to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of his/her System position.
- 57.08.5 No Board member or employee shall accept employment or engage in any business or professional activity that foreseeably might require or induce **him/her** to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of his/her System position.
- 57.08.6 No Board member or employee shall disclose confidential information gained by reason of his/her System position, nor shall he/she otherwise use such information for his/her personal gain or benefit.
- 57.08.7 No Board member or employee shall transact any business for the System with any entity of which he/she is an officer, agent, employee, or member, or in which he/she has a direct or indirect financial or other interest.
- 57.08.8 No Board member or any employee shall make personal investments in any enterprise that foreseeably might create a substantial conflict between his/her private interests and the System's interests.
- 57.08.9 No Board member or employee shall accept other employment that might impair his/her independence of judgment in the performance of his/her System duties.
- 57.08.10 No Board member or employee shall receive any compensation for his/her services to the System from any source other than the State of Texas except as is allowed by law.
- 57.08.11 No Board member or employee who exercises discretion in connection with contracts, purchases, payments, claims, or other pecuniary transactions shall solicit, accept, or agree to accept any benefit from a person or entity the employee knows or should know is or is likely to become financially interested in such transactions.
- 57.08.12 The University shall not accept a gift, grant, donation, or other consideration to be used as a salary supplement without the prior written approval of the recipient's immediate superior, the office of general counsel and the president, and written authorization of the internal auditor, who shall report the necessary information to the State Auditor.
- 57.08.13 No Board member or employee shall knowingly solicit, accept, or agree to accept any benefit for having exercised the officer's or employee's official powers or performed the officer's or employee's official duties in favor of another.
- 57.08.14 Each Board member or employee who is involved in procurement or in contract management, shall disclose to the agency any potential conflict of interest specific by state law or University policy that is known by the Board member or employee

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with respect to any contract with a private vendor or bid for the purchase of goods or services from a private vendor with the University.

- 57.08.15 No employee shall have a direct or indirect financial or other interest, shall engage in a business transaction or professional activity, or shall incur any obligation, that is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of the employee's duties for the institution.
- 57.08.16 No Board member or employee shall act as an agent for another person in the negotiation of the terms of an agreement relating to the provision of money, services, or property to the institution.
- 57.08.17 The resources of the University shall be used only in accordance with University policies and applicable law.

Failure of any employee to comply with the foregoing shall constitute grounds for discharge or other disciplinary action.

(Policy last updated 08/24/2017)

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

Texas Government Code § 572.051 – *Standards of Conduct; State Agency Ethics Policy*

Texas Government Code § 2113.014 – *Employee Standards of Conduct*

Texas Government Code § 2261.252 – *Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest; Certain Contracts Prohibited*

Texas Education Code § 51.923 – *Qualifications of Certain Business Entities to Enter into Contracts with an Institution of Higher Education*

Texas Education Code § 51.9337 – *Purchasing Authority Conditional: Required Standards*

UH System Board of Regents Policy 57.01 – *Code of Ethics*

System Administrative Memoranda (SAMs)

02.A.09 – *Conflict of Interest*

02.A.29 – *Ethical Conduct of Employees*

03.A.17 – *Disclosure of Related Party Interests*

BOARD OF REGENTS POLICIES

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM BOARD OF REGENTS CONFLICT OF INTEREST CERTIFICATION

FY 2021 - 2022

University of Houston System Board of Regents Policy requires that all members of the Board shall annually sign conflict of interest certification statements affirming their compliance with their official oath and specific provisions of Texas statutes related to ethical behavior. In accordance with this policy, I affirm that:

- I will faithfully execute the duties of the Board of Regents of the University of Houston System, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States and of this State. *See Texas Constitution Art. 16, § 1.*
- I have not directly or indirectly paid, offered, promised to pay, contributed, or promised to contribute any money or thing of value, or promised any public office or employment as a reward to secure my appointment or confirmation, whichever the case may be. *See Texas Constitution Art. 16, § 1.*
- I will file a verified financial statement with the Texas Ethics Commission in accordance with Texas Government Code §§ 572.022 through 572.0252. *See Texas Government Code § 572.021.*
- I shall publicly disclose to the board any personal or private interest that I have in a measure, proposal, or decision pending before the board in a meeting called and held in compliance with Texas Government Code Chapter 551 (the Texas Open Meetings Act). I acknowledge that I may not vote or otherwise participate in such a decision pending before the board and further understand that my public disclosure shall be entered in the minutes of the meeting. *See Texas Government Code § 572.058(a).*
- I will disclose any legal or equitable interest in property that is acquired with public funds. Such disclosure shall be made by filing an affidavit within 10 days before the date on which the property shall be acquired, containing specific information as required by Texas Government Code 553.002.
- **I shall not:**
 - Accept or solicit any gift, favor, or service that might reasonably tend to influence me in the discharge of my official duties or that I know or should know is being offered with the intent to influence my official conduct. *See Texas Government Code 572.051(a)(1).*
 - Accept other employment or engage in a business or professional activity that I might reasonably expect would require or induce me to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of my position. *See Texas Government Code 572.051(a)(2).*

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- Accept other employment or compensation that could reasonably be expected to impair my independence of judgment in the performance of my official duties. *See Texas Government Code 572.051(a)(3).*
- Make personal investments that could reasonably be expected to create a substantial conflict between my private interest and the public interest. *See Texas Government Code 572.051(a)(4).*
- Intentionally or knowingly solicit, accept, or agree to accept any benefit for having exercised my official powers or performed my official duties in favor of another. *See Texas Government Code 572.051(a)(5).*
- Intentionally or knowingly violate a law relating to my office with the intent to obtain a benefit or with intent to harm or defraud another. *See Texas Penal Code § 39.02(a)(1).*
- Intentionally or knowingly misuse government property, services, personnel, or any other thing of value belonging to the government that has come into my custody or possession by virtue of my office or employment, with the intent to obtain a benefit or with intent to harm or defraud another. *See Texas Penal Code § 39.02(a)(2).*

_____/_____
Signature Date

Printed Name _____

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM POLICIES

02.A.09 Conflict of Interest

[<http://www.uh.edu/af/universityservices/policies/sam/2HumanResources/2A9.pdf>]

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM

SECTION: Human Resources
AREA: General
SUBJECT: Conflict of Interest

NUMBER: 02.A.09

1. PURPOSE

Although the University of Houston System depends upon the integrity and discretion of its staff with respect to actual or apparent conflict of interest, all University of Houston System employees are expected to obey all federal, state and local laws. This administrative memorandum presents requirements to avoid conflicts of interest in accordance with Texas Government Code Section 572.051, Texas Education Code 51.9337, and Board of Regents Policies, including 57.01, 57.02, 57.04, 57.05, and 57.08.

2. POLICY

- 2.1. Conflict of interest is the use of one's University of Houston System employment to obtain unauthorized privileges, benefits, or things of value for oneself or others.
- 2.2. Guidelines to avoid conflict of interest include the following:
 - a. No employee shall solicit, accept, or agree to accept any privilege, benefit or thing of value for the exercise of ~~his or her~~ their discretion, influence or powers as an employee except as is allowed by law.
 - b. No employee shall accept any privilege, benefit or thing of value that might tend to influence ~~him or her~~ them in the discharge of ~~his or her~~ their duties as an employee.
 - c. No employee shall use ~~his or her~~ their position to secure special privileges or exemptions for ~~himself or herself~~ themselves or others, except as is allowed by law.
 - d. No employee may be an officer, agent, employee, or member of, or own an interest in a professional activity that foreseeably might require or induce ~~him or her~~ them to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of ~~his/her~~ their System position.
 - e. No employee shall accept employment or engage in any business or professional activity which foreseeably might require ~~him or her~~ them to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of ~~his/her~~ their University of Houston System position.
 - f. No employee shall disclose confidential information gained by reason of ~~his or her~~ their ~~component~~ university position, nor shall ~~he or she~~ they otherwise use such information for ~~his or her~~ their personal gain or benefit.
 - g. No employee shall transact any business for the University of Houston System with any entity of which ~~he or she is~~ they are an officer, agent, employee, or member, or in which ~~he or she has~~ they have a direct or indirect financial or other interest.

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- h. No employee shall make personal investments in any enterprise which foreseeably might create a substantial conflict between ~~his or her~~ their private interests and the University of Houston System's interests.
 - i. No employee shall accept other employment which might impair ~~his or her~~ their independence or judgment in the performance of ~~his or her~~ their University of Houston System duties.
 - j. No employee shall receive any compensation for ~~his or her~~ their services to the University of Houston System from any source other than the State of Texas except as is allowed by law.
 - k. No employee who exercises discretion in connection with contracts, purchases, payments, claims or other pecuniary transactions shall solicit, accept or agree to accept any benefit from a person or entity the employee knows, or should know, is or is likely to become financially interested in such transactions.
 - l. No employee shall ask the University to accept a gift, grant, donation, or other consideration to be used as a salary supplement without the prior written approval of the recipient's immediate superior, the office of the general counsel and the president, and written authorization of the internal auditor, who shall report the necessary information to the State Auditor.
 - m. No employee shall 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.
 - n. Each employee who is involved in procurement or in contract management shall disclose to the agency any potential conflict of interest specified by state law or University policy that is known by the employee with respect to any contract with a private vendor or bid for the purchase of goods or services from a private vendor with the University.
 - o. No employee shall have a direct or indirect financial or other interest, shall engage in a business transaction or professional activity, or shall incur any obligation, that is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of the employee's duties for the institution.
 - p. No employee shall act as an agent for another person in the negotiation of the terms of an agreement relating to the provision of money, services, or property to the institution.
 - q. Each employee shall use the resources of the University only in accordance with University policies and applicable law.
 - r. Any employee who is an officer, agent, employee or member of, or owns a direct or indirect financial or other interest in any entity doing business ~~with any component university of~~ the University of Houston System must disclose such relationship in writing to ~~his or her~~ their immediate superior.
- 2.3. Failure of an employee to comply with the foregoing or with applicable law shall constitute grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

3. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible Party: Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance

Review: Every five years ~~on or before August 31~~

4. APPROVAL

Approved:

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM POLICIES

Jim McShan-Raymond Bartlett

Interim Senior Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance

Renu Khator

Chancellor

Date: March 25, 2016 October 7, 2021

02.A.29 Ethical Conduct of Employees

<http://www.uh.edu/af/universityservices/policies/sam/2HumanResources/2A29.pdf>

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM

SECTION: Human Resources

NUMBER: 02.A.29

AREA: General

SUBJECT: Ethical Conduct of Employees

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. New federal and state laws and regulations, together with growing scrutiny of the complex relationships between individuals, public institutions and outside public and private organizations, necessitate the clarification of standards of accountability for public servants. Requirements for ethical behavior are especially important in public institutions of higher education; component university employees are accountable to taxpayers for the use of public funds and also have the responsibility to educate and lead component university students by example.
- 1.2. University of Houston System employees have a responsibility to the public in the performance of their official duties. High institutional and personal standards of conduct must be maintained to fulfill that responsibility. These standards must include avoiding any actions that would create the appearance of violation of laws or ethical principles. This document sets forth a code of accountability for component university employees in the performance of their component university responsibilities; it identifies areas of particular legal and ethical concern and specifies requirements for compliance with state laws, federal guidelines, Board of Regents policies, standards of ethics, and good business practices.

2. POLICY

- 2.1. Employees of the System shall avoid using their positions for purposes that are, or give the appearance of being, motivated by a desire for private gain for themselves or others, such as those with whom they have family, business, or other ties. **Component**—University employees shall exercise the utmost good faith in all transactions, activities, and behaviors related to their duties to the System and its property and resources. The principles of good faith and honest dealing apply to all aspects of the employee's responsibilities and activities

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM POLICIES

on the part of the **component** university, not just those identified in this directive as subject to particular statutes or causes for particular concern.

- 2.2. Prior to entering into any consulting, investment, professional or other arrangement that may involve a conflict of interest or commitment, a faculty or exempt employee must submit to the university or department head a complete written disclosure of the pending relationship and any potential conflicts that it may involve. The subsequent arrangements will then be subject to the approval of the appropriate dean, associate vice president, associate vice chancellor, or designee. This provision applies to all regular faculty and exempt staff and to non-exempt staff with procurement or research responsibilities.
- 2.3. On an annual basis, all non-University business activities and arrangements shall be reported to the Chancellor through the Senior Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance.
- 2.4. **Component** University employees shall promptly disclose to their supervisor or department head any substantiated information regarding what they believe to constitute a violation of this document or any law or institutional policy.
- 2.5. Failure to comply with the principles outlined in this document shall be considered a breach of the public trust and may subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, as well as to the possibility of criminal action.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. Benefit: Anything an independent third party observer might reasonably regard to provide a monetary gain or advantage. For the purposes of this policy, a benefit would include, but is not limited to, monetary gifts, meals, employment, or other items of significant gain or advantage. When the appropriateness of a benefit is in question, it should not be accepted.
- 3.2. Conflict of commitment: A situation in which an employee's outside activities interfere with the employee's primary commitment of time and intellectual energies to the University, or in which a full-time employee's primary professional loyalty is not to the System. The general permitted limit to external commitments is one day per calendar week, never to conflict with the employee's scheduled classes or other duties and responsibilities.
- 3.3. Conflict of interest: A situation in which there is a divergence between the employee's private interests and the employee's professional obligations to the **component** university (i.e., the public interest) such that an independent observer might reasonably question whether the employee's actions or decisions are determined by considerations of private gain, financial or otherwise, to the **component** university's detriment.
- 3.4. Family: Includes a family member related to an employee or official within the second degree by affinity or consanguinity. A family member under this definition includes the following relatives of the employee or official: child, parent, spouse, sister, brother, grandchild, grandparent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepson, stepdaughter, stepmother, stepfather, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, spouse's grandparent, spouse's grandchild, grandchild's spouse, or the spouse of a grandparent.

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- 3.5. Honoraria: A payment for speech, lecture, or services on which, by custom or agreement, a specific price may not be set. For the purposes of this policy, this definition includes any payment from an outside entity for services such as making a speech, teaching a class or workshop, or providing consulting services.
- 3.6. Relatives: Individual laws prescribe the relationships covered in specific provisions.
- 3.7. System Employee: An employee of the System is an individual who performs services that are subject to the will and control of the **component** university in terms of what must be done and how it must be done within legal parameters. For purposes of this document, the term "employee" refers to any individual serving in a faculty, research or staff capacity subject to the terms and conditions described above. An employee is paid through the payroll system, with accompanying tax withholding as provided by law.

4. PROVISIONS

- 4.1. Acceptance of gifts or other benefits: An employee of the System (or member of the employee's family) may not solicit or accept any gift, favor, privilege, benefit, service, exemption or thing of value that might influence the employee to perform his or her job differently. An employee should assume that anyone having business with the **component** university as a client, contractor, or vendor is likely to be seen as attempting to curry favor if that person provides any gift or benefit to the employee. More detailed directives related to conflict of interest may be found in Board Policy 57.08 and SAM 02.A.09 - Conflict of Interest.

The only gifts and benefits not subject to this restriction are those conferred on account of kinship or a personal or professional relationship independent of employee's status, non-cash items of less than \$50.00 in value, and those used solely to defray expenses accrued in the performance of official duties that are not reimbursable by the **component** university.

- 4.2. Bribery: A **component** university employee commits the criminal offense of bribery if the employee solicits, offers or accepts any benefit in exchange for a decision, opinion, recommendation, vote or other exercise of discretion by the employee.
- 4.3. Business, investments, and professional activity: An employee or the employee's family shall not make personal investments in any enterprise that foreseeably might create a significant conflict between the employee's private interests and the University's interests. An employee shall not transact any business for the University with any entity of which he or she is an owner, officer, agent, employee or member or in which the employee or the employee's family has a financial or other interest or accrues any benefit.
- 4.4. Charitable or professional organizations/pro bono work: Any contribution of time without compensation to charitable or professional organizations or causes that may infringe upon the employee's regular work hours must be disclosed to the employee's department head and must not interfere with the individual's University responsibilities.
- 4.5. Disclosure of confidential information: No **component** university employee shall disclose confidential information gained by reason of his or her position, nor shall the employee

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM POLICIES

otherwise use such information for personal gain or benefit. Similarly, no employee shall accept other employment or engage in any business or professional activity that foreseeably might require or induce the employee to disclose confidential information acquired through his or her position.

- 4.6. Dual employment: A System employee may hold another non-elective state or federal office or position of honor, trust, or profit only after being granted prior approval. The Board delegates to the Chancellor or designee the authority to approve such dual office holding by any System employee who is not an officer of the System or its **component** universities. Officers of the System are defined as executive management employees serving in the following positions: Chancellor, vice chancellor, General Counsel, president, vice president, dean (academic), Chief Audit Executive, and their equivalents (e.g., an administrative head of a recognized department reporting directly to the Chancellor or **component** university president). Such approval must be based on formal findings that the dual office holding is of benefit to the state or is required by state or federal law and that the situation creates no conflict of interest or commitment.
- 4.7. Governmental appearances or expert witness service: **Component** University employees appearing before Congress or the Texas Legislature or their agencies, committees, or members to offer testimony, opinions or commentary in regard to existing or potential laws, rules or regulations, unless expressly authorized to do so by the Board or the Chancellor, must clearly state in advance that they are appearing in their individual capacities and that their testimony, opinions and commentary are not authorized by and must not be construed as reflecting upon the position of the System.

Appearances as an expert witness by any employee of the System shall be subject to the provisions of SAM 02.D.07 - Expert Witness Services.

- 4.8. Honoraria: By state law, a **component** university employee may not solicit, agree to accept, or accept an honorarium in consideration for services the employee would not have been asked to provide but for his or her official position; i.e., for providing services on behalf of the **component** university. This prohibition includes a payment made to a third party if made in exchange of the employee's services. This restriction applies to any fee for any service provided in the employee's official capacity, but does not apply to food, transportation and lodging in connection with the service provided.
- 4.9. Lobbying by state employees, political campaigns, holding public office, and other political activities: The General Appropriations Act prohibits the use of state funds to influence the outcome of any election or any legislative measure. Likewise, this act restricts the use of any **component** university funds to hire lobbyists and provides restrictions against offering gifts to legislators and accepting gifts from legislators. Similarly, federal restrictions prohibit the use of federal funds to influence federal legislation. The Vice Chancellor for Governmental Relations shall be responsible for the general coordination of System governmental activities.

No **component** university employee may use his or her authority, influence, or time during University work hours to affect the result of any election or political campaign or to achieve any other political purpose. Likewise, University funds, equipment, or other resources may

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not be used to work on a political campaign. ~~Component~~ University employees may run for local elective office and serve as elected public officials so long as campaign activities ~~and duties for the local office~~ are not conducted during official ~~component~~ university hours and so long as the office does not involve a political party primary or a party affiliation. ~~The employee must provide prior notification to his or her supervisor of the candidacy and election to office.~~

- 4.10. Nepotism: Relatives of ~~component~~ university employees may not be employed in positions where the employee has the official authority to hire or recommend or approve the hiring, salary, or promotion of the relative, even if it results from marriage after the employment relationship was formed. The requirements of nepotism statutes may be found in Board Policy 57.07 and SAM 02.A.21 - Nepotism.
- 4.11. Outside consulting or other employment: The System expects employees to accord a full professional commitment to the ~~component~~ university during the terms of their appointments. Interaction between employees and external entities for reasonable periods of time and for personal remuneration may be desirable when the relationship benefits the University, enhances the professional skills of the employee, or constitutes a public service.

However, no employee shall accept consulting or external employment, that might impair his or her independence of judgment in performance of University duties, nor shall an employee receive any compensation from any source other than the State of Texas except as allowed by law. All consulting and other paid professional employment shall comply with Board Policy 57.02 and SAM 02.A.08 - Consulting and Paid Professional Service.

In accordance with Board Policy 57.05, any outside employment of the Chancellor, other officers of the System Administration, or the president or vice presidents of any ~~component~~ university, including serving on the Board of Directors or governing board of any outside organization, shall be approved in advance by the Board.

- 4.12. Reporting of time; maintenance of all records: It is a violation of law to falsify or alter the reporting of time worked, salary records, or any way revise ~~component~~ university documents or records so as to provide an unearned benefit to the employee or another party.
- 4.13. Transfer of research results, materials, products, records: Board Policy 21.08 requires that ~~component~~ university faculty and staff disclose on a timely basis the creation or discovery of all potentially patentable inventions created with University resources. Ownership of these inventions must be assigned to the ~~component~~ university regardless of source of funding.

~~Component~~ universities must have policies and procedures in place to ensure compliance with all applicable federal guidelines related to funded research, intellectual property, and related conflict of interest regulations.

- 4.14. Travel: Travel undertaken on official System business may be paid or reimbursed from University funds when arrangements comply with applicable SAMs 01.C.05 - Executive Travel, 03.A.03 - Business Travel, and 03.A.04 - University Credit Cards.

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- 4.15. Use of component-university equipment, facilities, support staff, and other resources: As a state employee, under statute, an employee is required to use component university property for component-university purposes only, not for personal or private purposes. In situations where there is no direct cost to the component university, such as use of telephones to make occasional local calls, such use is not considered a misapplication of state property and may be permitted within reason.

Use of component university facilities, space, equipment or support staff for any activity other than the conduct of the employee's job responsibilities is permitted only if an appropriate and equitable financial arrangement has been concluded between the individual and the institution prior to the beginning of the outside activity. Please review SAMs 01.B.06 – Facilities Reservation and Rentals and 03.A.05 – Contract Administration for additional guidance.

- 4.16. Use of System and component university names: The name of the University of Houston System or its component universities may in no case be used for advertising or procurement purposes by any individual or external organization for non-University purposes. Likewise, employees may not represent themselves as acting in the capacity of System or component university employees when conducting consulting or personal activities. The System as well as the component universities bear no responsibility for any actual or implied obligations or liabilities incurred by an individual resulting from a consulting or other paid professional agreement or activity.

5. COMPLIANCE

- 5.1. In compliance with Board Policy 57.01, each component university is required to provide a copy of the laws and policies comprising the code of ethics to employees annually and to each new employee at the start of their employment. To acknowledge receipt and understanding of these laws and policies, all employees must annually complete Code of Ethics training.

Each component university shall establish procedures related to the ethical conduct of employees that shall include the following compliance actions:

- a. Annual certification by regular faculty, exempt staff, and other key staff involved in procurement or funded research activities to include the following:
 - receipt of this document and compliance with its provisions,
 - disclosure of any external consulting, employment, and professional activities – including service on governing boards and ownership in outside enterprises - providing the names of the external employers/organizations involved,
 - disclosure of any actual or potential conflicts of interest related to external employment, acceptance of benefits, or external investments, and
 - any additional information that may be required by federal funding agencies.
- b. A procedure for the timely prior review and approval or disapproval of written disclosures of pending relationships by component university employees entering into any consulting, investment, professional, or other arrangement that may potentially involve a conflict of

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM POLICIES

interest or commitment. Such procedures shall require approval at the vice presidential or vice chancellor level of all such activities and annual reporting to the Chancellor.

- 5.2. In addition to these System-wide certifications, the Chancellor and presidents are required to submit an annual financial statement with the Texas Ethics Commission using the forms provided by the commission. Vice presidents, those at the director level or higher positions over procurement and contracting functions, and those others considered by the **component** to have high-level procurement responsibilities shall file with the chief financial officer of each ~~component~~ university a report disclosing the following information:
- a. The amount of any compensation received for services related to these associations; and
 - b. Known information regarding whether any of the organizations cited have any relationship to the System and a description of the relationship.
- 5.3. Information received during the annual certification shall be compiled and submitted to the Chancellor through the Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance prior to the Chancellor's annual report to the Board.

6. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible Party: Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance

Review: Every five years **on or before March 1**

7. APPROVAL

Approved: **Jim McShan Raymond Bartlett**
Interim Senior Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance
Renu Khator
Chancellor

Date: **March 25, 2016 May 27, 2021**

EXHIBIT A

Citations and References

General

System Board of Regents Policies:

21.08 Intellectual Property

57.02 Consulting and Paid Professional Service

57.04 Dual Office Holding

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57.07 Nepotism
57.08 Conflicts of Interest
81.01 Governmental Appearances

System Administrative Memoranda:

01.C.05 Executive Travel
02.A.08 Consulting and Paid Professional Service
02.A.09 Conflict of Interest
02.A.21 Nepotism
02.D.07 Expert Witness Services
03.A.03 Business Travel
03.A.04 University Credit Cards

Texas Revised Civil Statutes: Government Code Chapter 554 - Whistleblower Act

By Provision:

- 4.1. Acceptance of gifts or other benefits:
 - 08.A.03 Gift Acceptance – Gifts from Individual Donors
- 4.2. Bribery:
 - 01.C.04 Reporting/Investigating Fraudulent Acts
- 4.3. Business, investments, and professional activity:
 - 02.A.09 Conflict of Interest
 - 03.A.17 Disclosure of Related Party Interests
- 4.4. Charitable or professional organizations/pro bono work:
 - 03.A.17 Disclosure of Related Party Interests
- 4.5. Disclosure of confidential information:
 - 01.D.06 Protection of Confidential Information
 - 02.A.31 Access to and Maintenance of Personnel Files
- 4.6. Dual employment:
 - 02.B.02 Overtime and Compensatory Time
- 4.7. Governmental appearances or expert witness service:
 - 09.A.01 Governmental Relations Communications and Appearances
- 4.8. Honoraria:
 - 02.A.08 Consulting and Paid Professional Service
- 4.9. Lobbying by state employees, political campaigns, holding public office, and other political activities:
 - 02.A.39 Political Aid and Legislative Influence
- 4.10. Nepotism:

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02.A.21 Nepotism

- 4.11. Outside consulting or other employment:
 - 02.A.08 Consulting and Paid Professional Service
 - 4.12. Reporting of time and effort and maintenance of other records:
 - 02.F.03 Employee Time Reporting
 - 4.13. Transfer of research results, materials, products, records:
 - 4.14. Travel:
 - 01.C.05 Executive Travel
 - 03.A.03 Business Travel
 - 03.A.04 University Credit Cards
 - 4.15. Use of University equipment, facilities, support staff, and other resources:
 - 01.B.06 Facilities Reservation and Rental
 - 4.16. Use of University name:
 - 01.D.03 – Trademark Management
 - 01.E.01 – Office of Intellectual Property Management
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UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON POLICIES

02.04.07 Ethical Conduct of University Employees
[<http://www.uh.edu/af/universityservices/policies/mapp/02/020407.pdf>]

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: Human Resources

Number: 02.04.07

AREA: Employee Relations

SUBJECT: Ethical Conduct of University Employees

December 15, 1999; Revised April 1, 2016; Last Reviewed September 2, 2019

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This document outlines the processes prescribed by the university to ensure that employees are informed of their responsibilities for accountability and ethical conduct. It requires that any potential conflict be reviewed and reported in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and with Board of Regents policies.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Benefit: According to statute, anything reasonably regarded as providing monetary gain or advantage for an employee or an employee's family member. For the purposes of this document, such benefit shall include personal and individual invitations to meals, travel, entertainment, services or items of significant gain or advantage with a value of \$50 or more.
- B. Bribery: A situation in which an employee solicits, offers, or accepts a benefit in exchange for a decision, opinion, recommendation, vote, or other exercise of official discretion.
- C. Conflict of commitment: A situation in which an employee's outside activities interfere with the employee's commitment of time and intellectual energies to the university, or in which a full-time employee's professional loyalty is not to the University of Houston.
- D. Conflict of interest: A situation in which there is a divergence between the employee's private interests and professional obligations to the university (i.e., the public interest), such that an independent observer might reasonably question whether the employee's actions or decisions are determined by considerations of private gain, financial or otherwise, to the university's detriment.
- E. Consulting and outside employment: For the purposes of this document, activities undertaken for remuneration from a third party where the activity is within the scope of

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activities, functions, or expertise for which the individual is compensated by the University of Houston. This definition does not include unpaid public service or lectures for fees, unless these activities require significant amounts of time or they otherwise adversely affect the employee's performance of university duties.

- F. Honorarium: A payment for speech, lecture, or other services on which, by custom or agreement, a specific price may not be set. For the purposes of this document, this definition includes any payment from an outside entity for services such as making a speech, teaching a class or workshop, or providing consulting services.
- G. Family: Includes a family member related to an employee or official within the second degree by affinity or consanguinity. A family member under this definition includes the following relatives of the employee or official: child, parent, spouse, sister, brother, grandchild, grandparent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepson, stepdaughter, stepmother, stepfather, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, spouse's grandparent, spouse's grandchild, grandchild's spouse, or the spouse of a grandparent.
- H. Related-party interest: A business or personal relationship that exists between a university employee and an outside individual or organization that may influence the employee's actions or decisions due to considerations of private benefit - financial or otherwise - and/or may create or be perceived as creating a conflict of interest.

III. DISTRIBUTION OF POLICIES REGARDING ETHICAL CONDUCT

In accordance with state law or Board of Regents Policy 57.01.3, copies of the laws and Board of Regents Policies listed below are distributed and otherwise made available online upon initial employment (by Human Resources) and annually (by the Board of Regents' office). The system code of ethics includes:

- A. Statutory Standards of Conduct for State Employees, § 572.051, Texas Government Code
- B. Board of Regents Policies:
 - 1. Consulting and Paid Professional Service (57.02)
 - 2. Dual Office Holding (57.04)
 - 3. Nepotism (57.07)
 - 4. Conflicts of Interest (57.08)
 - 5. Academic Freedom (21.03)
 - 6. Governmental Appearances (81.01)
 - 7. Sexual Harassment (29.02)

IV. TIMELY DISCLOSURE OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST SITUATION

University employees are required and expected to take the initiative to disclose and request prior approval of their department head before entering into any activity or situation that may involve, or appear to involve, a conflict of interest or other potentially incompatible obligation.

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Such a relationship includes consulting or other outside employment, a relationship defined as a related-party interest, or any other relationship that results in a gift or other benefits to the employee or the employee's family, or any other conduct prohibited by Board Policy 57.08.

Under the terms of the Board Policy 57.02, exempt staff are required to obtain written approval from their supervisor prior to entering into a consulting/outside employment relationship; faculty are required to notify their department chair and dean prior to entering into such a relationship. Where a question of propriety of the proposed employment or business relationship exists, the department head shall submit the application to the dean (for faculty) or dean or director (for staff). The dean or director may, in turn, consult with the appropriate vice president, Human Resources, or the university Ethics Coordinator, as applicable, prior to resolving the conflict.

V. ANNUAL CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE AND REPORTING OF OUTSIDE CONSULTING/EMPLOYMENT AND DISCLOSURE OF EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

On an annual basis, consulting and outside employment shall be reported to the Board through the Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance.

Also, on an annual basis, a possible conflict with external business activities and benefits shall be reported to the appropriate vice president.

The Office of the Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance is responsible for coordinating this annual survey during the fall of each year, working with the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost and appropriate vice presidents. On an annual basis, the Office of the Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer will coordinate the annual certification of compliance with the Policy on Conflict of Interest for Research for those staff involved in research or educational activities funded or proposed for funding by an external sponsor.

VI. GUIDELINES, STANDARDS FOR EVALUATING AND RESOLVING POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST SITUATIONS

- A. Ethics violations include, but are not limited to, bribery, the existence of a conflict of commitment or the existence of a conflict of interest. With the exception of certain transportation, lodging and meals, an ethics violation may also include acceptance of honorarium where the employee solicits, accepts or agrees to accept an honorarium in consideration for services that the employee would not have been requested to provide but for the employee's official position. Ethics violations include those activities described in the statute and in the UH board policies listed in Section III above.
- B. Suspected ethics violations are to be reported to the university in one of the following manners:
 - 1. If the employee wishes to make an anonymous report, he/she may contact the State Auditor's Office (SAO) Hotline at 1-800-TX-AUDIT (1-800-891-8248).

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Anonymous reports can also be made via the web at Fraud & Non-Compliance Hotline or by calling 1-800-716-9007.

2. If the employee does not wish to remain anonymous, the employee should notify his/her supervisor, the Chief Audit Executive, CEO (or designee) and/or an appropriate enforcement authority. If the alleged violator is a senior manager, administrator, or executive, the employee should notify the Chief Audit Executive and/or an appropriate law enforcement authority.
 3. If the employee notifies his/her supervisor (or higher authority), the supervisor (or higher authority) must immediately direct the report to the CEO (or designee), the university Ethics Coordinator, or the Chief Audit Executive.
 4. The reporting employee will refrain from further examination of the incident, confrontation of the alleged violator, or further discussion of the incident with anyone other than the reporting employee's supervisor, the CEO (or designee), the university Ethics Coordinator, or the Chief Audit Executive and/or an appropriate law enforcement authority.
- C. Ethics violations are to be reported by the university office receiving the complaint to the university Ethics Coordinator. The Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel or designee is the university's Ethics Coordinator
- D. The Ethics Coordinator will make a determination as to the severity of the ethics violation and determine the appropriate university administrative unit(s) that may be a part of the investigation. Investigation of an alleged ethics violation may involve the Internal Auditing Department, University of Houston Department of Public Safety (UHDPS), and/or the General Counsel's Office. The employee's supervisor and the appropriate vice president will be notified, where appropriate.
- When a staff employee is involved, the investigation shall involve Human Resources and the appropriate vice president. When a faculty member is involved, the investigation shall include input from the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost. When sponsored projects are involved, the investigation shall include the Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer and the Policy on Conflict of Interest in Research will be followed, in addition to University policies.
- E. Confidentiality of the information and employee(s) involved in the investigation will be of utmost importance to ensure proper adjudication of the allegations.
- F. The investigative unit will render its recommendation and/or report to the Ethics Coordinator and the Chief Audit Executive. Recommendations from the investigative report will be reviewed by the Ethics Coordinator and the Chief Audit Executive and the appropriate vice president.

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- G. Based upon the findings of the ethics review process, appropriate administrative action will be taken to ensure that the investigated ethics violation is corrected.

VII. PROCESS FOR REQUESTING “ETHICS OPINION” FROM THE ETHICS COORDINATOR AND/OR THE ETHICS REVIEW PANEL

In any case, the responsible manager may contact the university Ethics Coordinator for direction and assistance in resolving a conflict situation.

Upon review, the Ethics Coordinator may confer with the Chief Audit Executive to review the situation and make a recommendation.

VIII. SANCTIONS FOR CONDUCT NOT MEETING STANDARDS OF ETHICS

Employees who fail to comply with the responsibilities and requirements outlined in this document may be subject to disciplinary action.

If criminal activity is involved, UHDPS will be involved and the employee will be subject to prosecution and criminal charges.

IX. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Party: Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel

Review: Every three years on or before October 1

X. APPROVAL

Jim McShan, Interim Vice President for Administration and Finance

Paula Short, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

Renu Khator, President

Date of President’s Approval: October 10, 2017

XI. REFERENCES

- Texas Government Code § 556.004 – Prohibited Acts of Agencies and Individuals
- Texas Government Code § 572.051 – Standards of Conduct; State Agency Ethics Policy
- Texas Government Code § 2113.014 – Employee Standards of Conduct
- Texas Government Code § 2261.252 – Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest; Certain Contracts Prohibited
- Texas Education Code § 51.923 – Qualifications of Certain Business Entities to Enter into Contracts with An Institution of Higher Education

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- Texas Education Code § 51.9337 – Purchasing Authority Conditional; Required Standards
- Texas Penal Code Chapter 36 – Bribery and Corrupt Influence
- Texas Penal Code Chapter 39 – Abuse of Office
- UH System Board of Regents Policy 21.03 – Academic Freedom
- UH System Board of Regents Policy 29.02 – Sexual Harassment
- UH System Board of Regents Policy 57.01 – Code of Ethics
- UH System Board of Regents Policy 57.02 – Consulting and Paid Professional Service
- UH System Board of Regents Policy 57.04 – Dual Office Holding
- UH System Board of Regents Policy 57.07 - Nepotism
- UH System Board of Regents Policy 57.08 – Conflicts of Interest
- UH System Board of Regents Policy 81.01 – Governmental Appearances
- SAM 01.C.04 – Reporting/Investigating Fraudulent Acts
- SAM 01.D.08 – Sexual Misconduct Policy
- SAM 01.G.01 – Sponsored Research Activities
- SAM 02.A.04 – Discipline and Dismissal of Regular Staff Employees
- SAM 02.A.08 – Consulting and Paid Professional Service
- SAM 02.A.09 – Conflict of Interest
- SAM 02.A.21 – Nepotism
- SAM 02.A.29 – Ethical Conduct of Employees
- SAM 02.A.39 – Political Aid and Legislative Influence
- SAM 02.D.07 – Expert Witness Services
- SAM 03.A.17 – Disclosure of Related Party Interests
- Texas Ethics Commission Guide to Ethics Laws for State Employees
(<https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/guides/Go-e.pdf>)

Addendum A

Statutory Standards of Conduct for State Employees Board of Regents 57.08 - Conflicts of Interest (See also § 572.051, Texas Government Code)

All members of the board and employees of the system and its component institutions shall adhere to the Statutory Standards of Conduct for State Employees, Section 572.051, Texas Government Code available online at <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/docs/gv/htm/gv.572.htm>. All members of the board and employees of the system and its component institutions shall avoid conflicts of interest, generally described as the use of one's university employment or position to obtain unauthorized privileges, benefits, services or things of value for oneself or others, including the following:

1. No board member or employee shall solicit, engage, or agree to accept any privilege, benefit, service or thing of value for the exercise of his or her discretion, influence, or powers as an employee except as is allowed by law.
2. No board member or employee shall accept any privilege, benefit, service or thing of value that might influence him or her in the discharge of his or her duties as an employee.

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3. No board member or employee shall use his or her position to secure special privileges or exemptions for themselves or others, except as is allowed by law.
4. No board member or employee may be an officer, agent, employee, or member of, or own an interest in a professional activity that might require or induce them to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of his or her system position.
5. No board member or employee shall accept employment or engage in any business or professional activity that might require or induce them to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of their system position.
6. No board member or employee shall disclose confidential information gained by reason of their system position, or otherwise use such information for personal gain or benefit.
7. No board member or employee shall transact any business for the system with any entity of which they are an officer, agent, employee, or member, or in which they own a significant interest.
8. No board member or employee shall make personal investments in any enterprise that might create a substantial conflict between their private interests and the system's interests.
9. No board member or employee shall accept other employment that might impair their independence of judgment in the performance of their system duties.
10. No board member or employee shall receive any compensation for services from any source other than the State of Texas except as allowed by law.
11. No board member or employee who exercises discretion in connection with contracts, purchases, payments, claims or other pecuniary transactions shall solicit, accept, or agree to accept any benefit from a person or entity the employee knows or should know is or is likely to become financially interested in such transactions.

Failure of any employee to comply with the foregoing shall constitute grounds for discharge or other disciplinary action.

BOARD OF REGENTS POLICY 57.08

57.08 Conflicts of Interest

All members of the Board and employees of the System and its component Universities shall adhere to and be furnished a copy of the Statutory Standards of Conduct for State Employees, Section 572.051, Texas Government Code, and shall avoid conflicts of interest, generally described as the use of one's University employment or position to obtain unauthorized privileges, benefits, or things of value for oneself or others, including the following:

57.08.1 No Board member or employee shall solicit, engage, or agree to accept any privilege, benefit or thing of value for the exercise of his/her discretion, influence, or powers as an employee or regent, except as is allowed by law.

57.08.2 No Board member or employee shall accept any privilege, benefit, or thing of value that might tend to influence him or her in the discharge of his/her duties as an employee or regent.

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57.08.3 No Board member or employee shall use his/her position to secure special privileges or exemptions for himself or herself or others, except as is allowed by law.

57.08.4 No Board member or employee may be an officer, agent, employee, or member of, or own an interest in a professional activity that foreseeable might require or induce him or her to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of his/her System position.

57.08.5 No Board member or employee shall accept employment or engage in any business or professional activity that foreseeable might require or induce him or her to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of his/her System position.

57.08.6 No Board member or employee shall disclose confidential information gained by reason of his/her System position, nor shall he/she otherwise use such information for his/her personal gain or benefit.

57.08.7 No Board member or employee shall transact any business for the System with any entity of which he/she is an officer, agent, employee, or member, or in which he/she has a direct or indirect financial or other interest.

57.08.8 No Board member or employee shall make personal investments in any enterprise that foreseeable might create a substantial conflict between his/her private interests and the System's interests.

57.08.9 No Board member or employee shall accept other employment that might impair his/her independence of judgment in the performance of his/her System duties.

57.08.10 No Board member or employee shall receive any compensation for his/her services to the System from any source other than the State of Texas except as is allowed by law.

57.08.11 No Board member or employee who exercises discretion in connection with contracts, purchases, payments, claims, or other pecuniary transactions shall solicit, accept, or agree to accept any benefit from a person or entity the employee knows or should know is or is likely to become financially interested in such transactions..

57.08.12 The University shall not accept a gift, grant, donation, or other consideration to be used as a salary supplement without the prior written approval of the recipient's immediate superior, the office of general counsel and the president, and written authorization of the internal auditor, who shall report the necessary information to the State Auditor.

57.08.13 No Board member or employee shall knowingly solicit, accept, or agree to accept any benefit for having exercised the officer's or employee's official powers or performed the officer's or employee's official duties in favor of another.

57.08.14 Each Board member or employee who is involved in procurement or in contract management shall disclose to the agency any potential conflict of interest specified by state law

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or University policy that is known by the Board member or employee with respect to any contract with a private vendor or bid for the purchase of goods or services from a private vendor with the University.

57.08.15 No employee shall have a direct or indirect financial or other interest, shall engage in a business transaction or professional activity, or shall incur any obligation, that is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of the employee's duties for the institution.

57.08.16 No Board member or employee shall act as an agent for another person in the negotiation of the terms of an agreement relating to the provision of money, services, or property to the institution.

57.08.17 The resources of the University shall be used only in accordance with University policies and applicable law.

Failure of any employee to comply with the foregoing shall constitute grounds for discharge or other disciplinary action. (Updated 11/19/2015) (Policy last updated 08/24/17)

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON RESEARCH POLICY ON CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN RESEARCH

"The cornerstone for managing conflicts of interest is transparency, and that begins with the Investigator's disclosure of Significant Financial Interests to the Institution." (CITI)

I. INTRODUCTION

The University of Houston is committed to maintaining a research environment that promotes attention to the highest ethical standards for research. This commitment includes compliance with regulatory requirements set forth by the Public Health Service (PHS),^{1,2} the National Science Foundation (NSF), and other regulatory and ethical bodies. It is the responsibility of the University to promote objectivity in research through the establishment of a Conflict of Interest Policy.

A conflict of interest might take various forms, but includes any circumstance where personal, professional, financial, or other private interests of a person or institution compromise or have

¹ **Agencies within the Public Health Service:** Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Administration for Community Living/Administration on Aging, Agency for Health Care Research & Quality (AHRQ), Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Indian Health Service (HIS), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Office of Global Affairs, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR)

² Many non-Public Health Service Agencies are now requiring compliance with Public Health Service Conflict of Interest Standards and Thresholds; for example: Alliance for Lupus Research (ALS), American Asthma Foundation (AAF), American Cancer Society (ACS), American Heart Association (AHA), American Lung Association (ALA), Arthritis Foundation (AF), Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International (JDRF), Lupus Foundation of America (LFA), Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. **These are updated continuously.**

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the potential to compromise the exercise of professional judgment or obligations, or may be perceived as doing so. It is important to note that a conflict of interest depends on the situation and how it can be perceived, not necessarily on the character or the actions of the individual.

Conflicts of interest can arise from the fact that a mission of the University is to promote public good by fostering the transfer of knowledge gained through University research and scholarship to the private sector. Two important means of accomplishing this mission include consulting and the commercialization of technologies derived from University research. It is appropriate that individuals be rewarded for their participation in these activities through consulting fees, sharing in royalties arising from the commercialization of their work, ownership and/or other associations with start-up companies. It is wrong, however, for an individual's actions or decisions, made in the course of his or her University activities, to be guided by considerations of personal financial gain. Such behavior calls into question the professional objectivity and ethics of the individual and reflects negatively on both the Institution and the external sponsor of the research activity. Members of the academic community should conduct their affairs so as to avoid or minimize conflicts of interest, and must respond appropriately when apparent conflicts of interest arise.

The purpose of this policy is to educate individuals about situations that generate research-related financial conflicts of interest, and to provide means for faculty, staff, students, and the University to identify, manage, reduce, and/or eliminate actual or potential conflicts of interest. Every member of the academic community has an obligation to become familiar with, and abide by, the provisions of this policy.

II. KEY DEFINITIONS

- **Investigator** – This policy applies to all individuals who meet the definition of Investigator. Specifically:

The project director or principal Investigator, and any other persons, regardless of title or position, who are responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of research or educational activities funded³ or proposed for funding. In addition, any research team member who indicates a financial interest related to the submission of a human or animal research protocol will be asked to complete a certification.

This policy, therefore, can apply to collaborators, consultants, post-doctoral fellows, graduate students, and others who meet the threshold for responsibility.

At a minimum, all individuals listed as an investigator or key personnel on a research project must file a certification. It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator (PI) to determine if other research team members meet this threshold based on their role in the research. See Compliance Guidance [here](#).

³ For the purpose of this policy, any gifts to a college or department with the intent of funding a research project are treated as a research award.

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- **Research** - An activity is considered research if it meets the definition of research provided by the agency funding the project, or any agencies that oversee the project.⁴ If unfunded or not otherwise defined, the following definitions apply:
 - A systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Activities which meet this definition constitute research for purposes of this policy, whether or not they are conducted or supported under a program which is considered research for other purposes.⁵
 - Systematic study directed toward fuller scientific knowledge or understanding of the subject studied. Research is classified as either basic or applied according to the objectives of the sponsoring agency⁶
- **Certification/Disclosure Process** – All individuals who meet the definition of Investigator as defined above must provide certification of their knowledge of and compliance with this policy on an annual basis. The certification process involves either a certification that no significant financial interests exist, or the disclosure of existing significant financial interests to the Institution. In addition to the annual requirement, the acquisition or discovery of new financial interests requires disclosure within 30 days. All disclosures are reviewed by the University of Houston's Conflict of Interest Committee (COIC).
- **Significant Financial Interest (SFI)** – Anything of monetary value, whether the value is readily ascertainable, that 1) is related to the Investigator's professional responsibilities on behalf of the Institution; and 2) belongs to the Investigator or the Investigator's spouse or dependent children. Additional details regarding what constitutes a Significant Financial Interest are specified in Section III.
- **Financial Conflict of Interest (FCOI)** – A significant financial interest that could directly and significantly affect the design, conduct, or reporting of research.⁷ Similarly, if a significant financial interest could reasonably appear to be affected by the research,⁸ or the interest is in entities whose financial interests would reasonably appear to be affected by the research,^{3,9} review and elimination or management of the conflict is required.
- **Institutional Responsibilities** – Investigators' professional responsibilities on behalf of the Institution including, but not limited to, activities such as research, research consultation, teaching, professional practice, Institutional committee memberships, and service on panels such as Institutional Review Boards and Data Safety Monitoring Boards. All duties referred to in the University of Houston Faculty Handbook are considered Institutional Responsibilities.

⁴ For example, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), in cases of clinical investigations under 21 CFR 46.102 (c)

⁵ 45 CFR 46.102(d): For example, some demonstration and service programs may include research activities.

⁶ <https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/fedfunds/glossary/def.htm>

⁷ PHS definition

⁸ Also applies to NSF-funded educational activities [NSF Grant Policy Manual, Chapter V, 510]

⁹ NSF definition, also applies to NSF-funded educational activities

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- **Designated Official** – the individual at the Institution responsible for the solicitation and review of disclosures of significant financial interests from each Investigator who is participating in, or is planning on participating in, research. The Designated Official for the University of Houston is the Vice Chancellor/Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer.

III. CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE

All individuals meeting the definition of Investigator as defined in this policy must certify their knowledge of and compliance with this policy by completing a Conflict of Interest Certification at least annually. Certifications and associated disclosures must also be actively updated:

- At the time of submission for new funding
- If unrelated to proposals for funding, at the time of submission of human or animal protocols if financial relationships related to the research exist
- Within 30 days of discovering or acquiring (e.g., through purchase, marriage, or inheritance) a new significant financial interest.

All significant financial interests held by investigators and their immediate family members¹⁰ must be disclosed. A **Significant Financial Interest (SFI)** is a financial interest that falls into one of the following categories and is reasonably related to any of an investigator's institutional duties:

- Remuneration in excess of \$5,000 from a publicly-traded entity¹¹ during the preceding 12 months. For purposes of this definition, remuneration includes salary and any payment for services not otherwise identified as salary (e.g., consulting fees, honoraria, paid authorship);
- Equity interest (stock, stock options, or other ownership interest) in a publicly traded company valued in excess of \$5,000 at the time of certification;
- Any combination of the above two items (equity and income) that exceeds \$5,000 during the preceding 12 months;
- Any amount of equity (stock, stock options, or other ownership interest) in a non-publicly traded entity, including a start-up company;
- Remuneration that exceeds \$5,000 from a non-publicly traded entity in the past 12 months, or
- Intellectual property rights and interests (e.g. patents and copyrights), upon receipt of such income related to such rights and interests Income related to intellectual property rights in excess of \$5,000 paid by any source other than the Investigator's current Institution¹².

All disclosed significant financial interests that have a potential relationship to the discloser's engagement in research on behalf of the University of Houston are reviewed by the Conflict of

¹⁰ Spouse and dependent children

¹¹ A company whose stock is available for purchase by the general public

¹² Unlicensed intellectual property that does not generate income is also excluded from the definition of Significant Financial Interest. Nonetheless, such interests have the potential to become significant and generate income, at which point they would become subject to the regulation

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Interest Committee (COIC) to determine if these interests conflict, or appear to conflict, with the research.

The following DO NOT require disclosure:

- Salary royalties, or other remuneration paid by the Institution to the Investigator if the Investigator is currently employed or otherwise appointed by the Institution,
- Income from seminars, lectures, or teaching engagements sponsored by a federal, state or local government agency, or an Institution of higher education within the United States ¹³ as defined at 20 U.S.C. 1001(a), an academic teaching hospital, a medical center, or a research institute that is affiliated with an Institution of higher education,
- Income from investment vehicles, such as mutual funds and retirement accounts, as long as the Investigator does not directly control the investment decisions made in these vehicles;
- Income from service on advisory committees or review panels for a federal, state or local government agency, or Institution of higher education within the United States ¹⁴ as defined at 20 U.S.C. 1001(a), an academic teaching hospital, a medical center, or a research institute that is affiliated with an Institution of higher education, or
- Intellectual Property Rights assigned to the Institution and agreements to share in royalties related to such rights

A disclosure MUST include:

- The investigator's current or pending relationship with the outside enterprise or entity in which a significant financial interest exists;
- The relationship of the research ¹⁵ to the enterprise or entity,
- The means by which the investigator proposes to address actual or potential conflicts of interest that arise from his/her (or immediate family members) dual University and enterprise or entity roles, and
- The dollar amount of the financial interest in specified ranges.

Common sense must prevail in the interpretation of these provisions. That is, if a reasonable, disinterested person would question the relationship, it should be disclosed and approval sought for the proposed arrangement.

All investigator certifications and associated disclosures are submitted through and maintained within the university's Integrated Compliance Online Network (ICON).

Certifications ***with disclosures meeting threshold*** require additional online acknowledgment as follows:

¹³ Investigators, including subrecipient Investigators, must disclose all financial interests received from a foreign Institution of higher education or the government of another country (which includes local, provincial, or equivalent governments of another country as detailed here: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-18-160.html>)

¹⁴ Investigators, including subrecipient Investigators, must disclose all financial interests received from a foreign Institution of higher education or the government of another country (which includes local, provincial, or equivalent governments of another country as detailed here: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-18-160.html>)

¹⁵ or NSF-funded educational activity

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Primary Appointment	Required Signatory if Significant Financial Interest is Disclosed
Tenure track academic faculty appointments	Department Chair
Non-tenure track research faculty appointments	Department Chair
Staff & students employed by an academic department or college	Department Chair
Staff & students employed by a Division of Research Center	Department Chair
Tenure track academic faculty appointments affiliated with a Division of Research Center	Department Chair
Non-tenure track research faculty appointments with a Division of Research Center	Center Director
Department Chair	College Dean
Division of Research Center Directors	Department Chair
College Dean	Provost
Provost, VP for Research	President Department Chair (if applicable)
President	Board of Regents
Exceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - College of Social Work - College of Architecture - College of Law - College of Hotel/Restaurant Mgmt - College of Optometry - College of Nursing - Academic Affairs (without department/college affiliation) - College of Business (Small Business Development Center only) 	Assoc. Dean for Research Assoc. Dean for Research Assoc. Dean for Research Assoc. Dean for Research Assoc. Dean for Research Assoc. Dean Provost Sr. Assoc. Dean for Faculty

Those faculty appointments with dual assignments require review by their primary appointment and are the responsibility of that college/department. Updated for clarification re: responsibility for review/management for faculty with dual appointment (10/2018)

Those required to acknowledge the Disclosure are encouraged to provide input with regard to additional factual information, concerns, or any conditions or restrictions that might be imposed by the Institution to manage, reduce, or eliminate such conflict of interest. This information will be made available to the COIC for consideration. The Division of Research reserves the discretion to add additional acknowledgers as deemed appropriate.

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TRAVEL

With some exceptions, PHS-funded investigators must disclose reimbursed or sponsored travel paid for by a third-party entity, including non-profit organizations. Disclosure is *not* required for travel sponsored by or reimbursed by a government agency, a U.S. Institution of higher education or a research institute affiliated with such, a U.S. medical center, or a U.S. academic teaching hospital. When a travel request submitted through Concur indicates that an employee's travel is sponsored or reimbursed by a third party and the traveler is listed on a PHS award, the Conflict of Interest (COI) office in the Division of Research will receive an automated notification to review the Travel Request. *This does not slow down the approval process as the COI office is not involved in approving the Travel Request.* The COI Office will notify the traveler if further disclosure of the travel and reimbursement information is required.

Travel disclosures must include, at a minimum: the purpose of the trip, the identity of the sponsor/organizer, the destination, and the duration. The COIC will determine if further information is required, including a determination or disclosure of monetary value, in order to determine whether the travel constitutes an FCOI with PHS-funded research.

PROCUREMENT

In accordance with Texas Government Code 2261.252 and University policy, all institutional employees who are involved in procurement or contract management must disclose if they plan to purchase, or recommend or approve the purchase of, goods or services for the University of Houston from an entity with which they or a family member have a direct or indirect financial or other interest.¹⁶ In cases where a financial interest disclosed to the COIC may lead to the procurement of goods or services for the university (including university research), the University of Houston Division of Administration and Finance will be notified and the disclosure will be forwarded for their review; this review may result in additional management requirements. For questions regarding Texas Government Code 2261.252, please contact the Division of Administration and Finance.

IV. DISCLOSURE REVIEW PROCESS

All disclosures indicating a significant financial interest will be reviewed by the University of Houston's Conflict of Interest Committee, who shall advise the Vice Chancellor/Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer. This review will take into consideration any comments or concerns provided by the signatory.

An actual or potential conflict of interest exists when the Committee reasonably determines that the significant financial interest could directly and significantly affect the design, conduct, or reporting of research¹⁷ conducted on behalf of the University of Houston. Additional information may be required by the Committee to make this determination.

¹⁶ Family members include the following relatives of the employee: child, parent, spouse, sister, brother, grandchild, grandparent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepson, stepdaughter, stepmother, stepfather, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, spouse's grandparent, spouse's grandchild, grandchild's spouse, or the spouse of a grandparent.

¹⁷ or NSF-funded educational activities

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The policy does not apply to **Phase I** Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) applications/awards. However as the policy does apply to **Phase II** SBIR/STTR applications and awards, it is highly recommended that such interests are discussed with the COI office as a best practice, to ensure minimal delays in progressing to Phase II awards and beyond.

MANAGEMENT PLANS

If it is determined that a conflict exists, a final written agreement to manage the conflict is established by the COIC¹⁸. The investigator is required to accept the plan within the ICON system. A specific individual¹⁹ is assigned to monitor adherence to this plan and report to the COIC on a routine basis until the conflict is established within ICON to no longer exist.

Examples of conditions or restrictions that might be imposed to manage, reduce, or eliminate actual or potential conflicts of interest can include, but are not limited to:

- Public disclosure of the conflict in publications and presentations
- Disclosure to human subjects participating in the research²⁰
- Disclosure to other research team members
- Appointment of an independent third party to monitor the research
- Modification of the research plan, with approval by the sponsor
- Change of personnel or personnel roles so that the individual in conflict does not participate in the part of the research that could be affected
- Reducing or eliminating the financial interest (e.g., sale of an equity interest)
- Severance of relationships that create financial conflicts

The institution may also request active monitoring of relationships that are determined not to represent direct and significant conflicts of interest if there is a reasonable potential for a conflict to develop in the future, based on the direction of the research and/or the relationship with the financial interest.

Departments, Colleges, and Center Directors are responsible for ensuring that required management plans are carried out and monitored until the completion of the research. All parties responsible for ensuring compliance with the management plan, including the monitor, will receive notification of the plan as follows:

¹⁸ As delegated by the Institutional Official

¹⁹ The assigned monitor is, by default, the signatory on the disclosure unless otherwise delegated.

²⁰ The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), in 21 CFR 54, sets forth additional regulatory requirements for financial disclosures by clinical investigators. If a University of Houston investigator holds the IND or IDE for FDA-regulated research, they are considered sponsor-investigators and are responsible for collecting and maintaining financial disclosures and related management plans. Please contact the COIC at COI@Central.uh.edu if you are a sponsor-investigator.

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Position	Parties Copied on Management Plan (in addition to the Signatory, plan monitor, and VP for Research/Tech Transfer)
Tenure track academic faculty appointments	College Dean
Non-tenure track research faculty appointments	College Dean
Staff & students employed by an academic department or college	College Dean
Staff & students employed by a Division of Research (DOR) Center	Center Director
Tenure track academic faculty appointments affiliated with a DOR Center	College Dean
Non-tenure track research faculty appointments with a DOR Center	N/A
Department Chair	Provost
Division of Research Center Directors	N/A
College Dean	N/A
Provost, VP for Research	College Dean (if applicable)
President	N/A
Exceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - College of Social Work - College of Architecture - College of Law - College of Hotel/Restaurant Mgmt - College of Optometry - College of Nursing - Academic Affairs (without department/college affiliation) - College of Business (Small Business Development Center only) 	College Dean College Dean College Dean College Dean College Dean College Dean College Dean

Should an investigator wish to appeal a decision made by the COIC, he or she may present the appeal in writing to the Committee through the following email address: coi@central.uh.edu. The Institutional Official will be made aware of all appeals.

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V. TRAINING

All individuals meeting the definition of Investigator in Section II must take an Institutionally-recognized FCOI training course before utilizing research funds and at least once every four years²¹. The University of Houston recognizes the FCOI modules 1 and 2 provided through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), of which UH is a member. Additional training may be required more often under certain circumstances (e.g., failure to disclose significant financial interests, noncompliance with approved management plan).

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Institution

1. Designated Official (DO)

The University of Houston Designated Official, for purposes of this policy, is the Vice Chancellor/Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer. The Designated Official is responsible for the solicitation and review of disclosures of significant financial interests from each Investigator at the Institution. The DO has delegated the solicitation/review responsibility to the University of Houston's Conflict of Interest Committee (COIC). The DO is provided all plans for the management of financial conflicts of interest, and works closely with the Committee to provide input as necessary.

2. The Conflict of Interest Committee (COIC)

The University of Houston's Conflict of Interest Committee reports to the Vice Chancellor/Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer. The COIC is comprised of a minimum of 5 COIC members, which includes a Chairperson. As necessary, ex-officio members²² (including regular ex-officio representation from UH General Counsel) and a non-affiliated member²³ may be included. Members will be chosen to best represent the expertise and interests of the research being conducted at the University of Houston. COIC members will meet on a monthly basis as needed to review the disclosures and annual certifications that have been submitted through the ICON system to the Division of Research.

The COIC will determine²⁴ whether an Investigator's submitted SFI could directly and significantly affect the research or is in an entity whose financial interest could be affected by the research. If it is determined that either of these conditions is valid, a Financial Conflict of Interest exists. In the case of a Financial Conflict of Interest and prior to the expenditure of any research funds, the COIC will work with the Investigator, Chair, Dean, and DO to develop a plan to manage or eliminate the conflict, and to ensure to the extent possible that the research is free of bias.

COIC members will serve for a term of three years, at which time membership services and representation of the University's research interests will be reviewed. Members can serve consecutive terms with the concurrence of the DO. The COIC Chair and/or DO

²¹ Once the initial training has been completed, CITI offers a refresher course for every subsequent 4 years.

²² Ex-Officio (non-voting) member: An ex-officio member will be chosen to provide additional information and assistance relevant to the COIC dealings, but will not be a voting member.

²³ Non-Affiliated Member: A non-affiliated member with no direct family or University ties.

²⁴ Within 60 days for PHS-funded research.

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reserves the right to replace any committee member for non-performance or reasons related to ethical concerns.

3. Additional Division of Research (DOR) Responsibilities

- Maintenance of an up-to-date, written, enforced policy on research FCOI, made available through the publicly accessible University of Houston Division of Research website.
- Notification to Investigators of new regulations and revised Institutional policy/Investigator responsibilities.
- Reporting all required information regarding Financial Conflicts of Interest to federal sponsors.
- Making information regarding FCOIs of senior/key personnel on PHS funded projects publicly available.
- Maintenance/retention of all required FCOI records per funding agency requirements.

B. Investigator

- Being familiar with and abiding by federal regulations and UH Policy regarding FCOI.
- Ensuring that FCOI training is complete prior to utilizing research funds and at least once every four years, as outlined in section V.
- Filing an FCOI Certification and disclosure (if appropriate) to the Institution annually and within 30 days of discovering or acquiring a new significant financial interest.
- Confirming agreement to and complying with any management plan issued by the Institution; retaining documentation that demonstrates compliance with the management plan, such as but not limited to: notices to journal editors or conference audiences, consent forms from human subjects research, and notices to laboratory personnel.

C. Colleges, Departments, and Center Directors

- Colleges, Departments, and Center Directors are responsible for ensuring that investigators submit annual certifications and disclosures.
- Ensuring that the assigned plan monitor adheres to the monitor reporting timeline as determined by the COIC.
- As indicated in Section III, signatories are encouraged to provide input with regard to additional factual information, concerns, or any conditions or restrictions that might be imposed by the Institution to manage, reduce, or eliminate such conflict of interest. Acknowledgers will also be actively involved in the final monitoring of plans to manage or eliminate conflicts.
- **Departments, Colleges, and Center Directors are responsible for ensuring that required management plans are carried out and monitored until the completion of the research.**

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VII. AWARDEES AND SUBRECIPIENTS

When the University of Houston is the primary awardee of a collaborative PHS- or NSF-funded project, it must assure that the financial interests of all subrecipients are reviewed and eliminated or managed properly. During the proposal stage and during the negotiation of a subaward, all subrecipients/potential subrecipients of PHS funding will be required to certify the following in writing via a Letter of Compliance:

- The subrecipient Institution has a policy in place to review and manage Significant Financial Conflicts of Interest that meets regulatory requirements.
- The subrecipient's policy applies to the subawarded portion of the research project, and
- The subrecipient must agree that the identification of and management plan of any FCOI identified will be submitted to the awardee Institution for required reporting purposes.

If the subawardee Institution does not have a compliant FCOI program in place, the agreement must indicate that the subrecipient will follow UH FCOI policy, including the pre-award and annual submission of a Certification (and disclosure, if applicable) to the UH COIC **within 30 days of the submission of the proposal**.

VIII. REPORTING

The Division of Research is responsible for reporting Financial Conflicts of Interest to funding agencies, as applicable:

Public Health Service (PHS)-Funded Projects

Initial Report

- Prior to the expenditure of funds under a PHS-funded research project, the University of Houston must report any Investigator Significant Financial Interests that are determined by the COIC, or a subrecipient Institution, to constitute a Financial Conflict of Interest.

Interim Reports

- The Institution must submit an FCOI report within sixty (60) days after its determination that an FCOI exists for an Investigator who is newly participating in the project or for an existing Investigator who discloses a new Significant Financial Interest to the Institution during the period of award.
- A FCOI report is required in cases of noncompliance (when an Investigator does not disclose a previously existing Significant Financial Interest in a timely fashion or the Institution fails to review a previously existing Significant Financial Interest during an ongoing NIH-funded project).

Annual Reports

- For any Financial Conflict of Interest previously reported by the Institution, the Institution shall provide an annual FCOI report that addresses the status of the financial interest and any

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changes to the management plan. Annual FCOI reports must specify whether the Financial Conflict of Interest is still being managed or explain why the Financial Conflict of Interest no longer exists. Annual FCOI reports must be submitted to the NIH for the duration of the project period (including extensions with or without funds) at the same time the Institution is required to submit the annual progress report, but through an alternative mechanism.

National Science Foundation (NSF)-Funded Projects

The University of Houston must notify NSF's Office of the General Counsel if it determines that it is unable to manage a Conflict of Interest related to an NSF-funded project satisfactorily. If the University of Houston determines a financial conflict with NSF research to be unmanageable (i.e. imposing conditions or restrictions would be either ineffective or inequitable, and the potential negative impacts that may arise from a significant financial interest are outweighed by the interests of scientific progress, technology transfer, or the public health and welfare), the NSF Office of the General Counsel will be notified electronically. UH and awardees will cooperate with the OGC's review of the institutional conflict of interest policy, actions taken by the institution with respect to the unmanageable conflict, and NSF requests for confirmation that proposed actions have been accomplished.

Other Funding Agencies

The University of Houston will make other required FCOI reports based on applicable funding agency requirements.

IX. FCOI RECORD RETENTION

The Division of Research is responsible for the maintenance and retention of all financial disclosure documentation and of all actions taken to resolve conflicts of interest for at least three years beyond the date of submission of the final expenditures report of the grant to which they relate, or until the resolution of any funding agency action involving those records, whichever is longer. Additional retention might be required under 45 CFR 74.53(b) and 92.42 (b) for different situations.

X. NONCOMPLIANCE

Failure of any investigator to comply with this policy shall constitute grounds for disciplinary action. Disciplinary action is based upon a reasonable investigation of the noncompliance and is consistent with the severity of the violation. A range of examples includes, but is not limited to, the requirement for additional training/monitoring for minor violations up to the imposition of restrictions on an academic staff member's participation in sponsored research for severe or continuing violations.

Additional PHS Requirements

- If an investigator fails to disclose a SFI in a timely manner or if for any reason the Institution fails to review a SFI, the Institution must, within 60 days, determine whether the SFI is related to the research, and whether it rises to the level of a FCOI. If found to be an FCOI, a management plan, even if interim, must be implemented. A FCOI report must be made to PHS at this time.

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- In addition, where it is discovered that an the University of Houston has failed to manage a FCOI or where a researcher has failed to comply with a management plan, the Institution must, within 120 days, complete a retrospective review of research to determine whether the research conducted during the period of noncompliance was biased in the design, conduct, or reporting of the research. If bias is identified, a mitigation report must be developed that outlines a plan of action to eliminate or mitigate the effect of the bias. The results of that determination and the mitigation report must be submitted to PHS.

XI. PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY

The Institution is required to make its policy on Financial Conflict of Interest publicly accessible via its website. In addition, responses to public information requests for information concerning Significant Financial Interests must be disclosed within five business days in writing. Disclosures must meet the following criteria:

- The significant financial interest was disclosed and is still held by the senior/key personnel as related to the PHS-funded project,
- The Institution determines that the Significant Financial Interest is related to the PHS-funded research, and
- The Institution determines that the Significant Financial Interest is a Financial Conflict of Interest.

The information that must be disclosed includes the following:

- Investigator's name;
- Investigator's title and role with respect to the research project;
- Name of the entity in which the Significant Financial Interest is held;
- Nature of the Significant Financial Interest; and
- Approximate dollar value of the Significant Financial Interest (dollar ranges are permissible: \$0-\$4,999; \$5,000-\$9,999; \$10,000-\$19,999; amounts between \$20,000-\$100,000 by increments of \$20,000; amounts above \$100,000 in increments of \$50,000) or a statement that the interest is one for which the value cannot be readily determined through reference to public prices or other reasonable measures of fair market value.

Written Requests for information may be made through:

- UH's public-facing Conflict of Interest website:
<http://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/coi/contact-us/>
- Via email at coi@central.uh.edu.

XII. RELATED RESOURCES

Department of Health and Human Services Code of Federal Regulations:

42 CFR Part 50; 45 CFR Part 94

21 CFR Part 54

Conflict of Interest FAQs

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National Science Foundation Award and Administration Guide. Chapter IV
University of Houston Manual of Administrative Policies and Procedures (MAPP 08.01.01)
University of Houston System Administrative Memorandum (SAM 01.G.01)
UH Division of Administration and Finance Travel Request
UH Faculty Handbook

Effective Date: August 24, 2012

Revisions: 07/2013

05/2014

12/2014

01/2016

04/2016

05/2018

07/2018

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-DOWNTOWN POLICIES

05.C.07 Code of Conduct – Procurement Responsibilities
<https://www.uhd.edu/administration/employment-services-operations/resources/Documents/PS05C07.pdf>

Memo to: UH-Downtown/PS Holders

UH-Downtown/PS 05.C.07

Issue No. 3 4

From: William Flores, Juan Sánchez Muñoz President Effective date: 09/16/14 02/21/2020

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Subject: Code of Conduct – Procurement Responsibilities

1. PURPOSE

University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) employees have a responsibility to the public to maintain high institutional and personal standards in the performance of their official duties. This document defines the standards of conduct that must be met by all university employees engaged in any activity related to purchasing or contracting for goods or services for the university regardless of the funding source. This document complies with state and federal laws, standards of ethics, and good business practices.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Benefit: Anything reasonably regarded as providing monetary gain or advantage. For the purposes of this policy, such benefit shall include personal and individual invitations to meals or items of significant gain or advantage with a value of \$50.00 or more.
- 2.2 Conflict of Interest: A situation in which there is a divergence between the employee's private interests and the employee's professional obligations to the university (i.e., the public interest) such that an independent observer might reasonably question whether the employee's actions or decisions are determined by considerations of private gain, financial or otherwise, to the university's detriment. Such a situation may result from consulting or other outside paid professional service, a relationship defined as a related-party interest, or any other relationship that results in a gift or other benefits to the employee.
- 2.3 Related Party Interest: A business or personal relationship that exists between a component university employee and an outside individual or organization that may influence the employee's actions or decisions due to considerations of private benefit - financial or otherwise - and/or may create or be perceived as creating a conflict of interest.

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- 2.4 Immediate Family: Includes spouse and dependent children. Dependent children, for the purposes of this policy, include adopted, step, and foster children as well as natural sons and daughters.
- 2.5 Procurement or Purchasing Activities include:
 - 2.5.1 Approval, disapproval, or recommendations concerning a procurement transaction
 - 2.5.2 Preparation of any part of procurement actions
 - 2.5.3 Influencing the content of any specification or procurement standard
 - 2.5.4 Acting in any advisory capacity, including rendering of advice, investigation, or auditing in any procurement activity
- 2.6 Regular Employee: A university employee who is employed at least 20 hours per week on a regular basis for a period of at least 4-1/2 months, excluding students employed in a position for which student status is a condition of employment.
- 2.7 Department Head: In case of a principal investigator, his/her academic department head. In the case of a staff employee, it is the employee's immediate supervisor.
- 2.8 Consulting and Other Outside Employment Relationship: Activities undertaken for remuneration from a third party within the scope of activities, functions, or expertise for which the individual is compensated by the University of Houston-Downtown.

3. POLICY

- 3.1 This policy applies to all procurement activities by all university employees and in particular to regular faculty, exempt staff, and non-exempt staff who have certifying signature authority. These directives apply to procurement actions from all sources of funds.
- 3.2 UHD employees shall not participate in the selection of a vendor or the award or administration of any contract or purchase if a real or apparent conflict of interest would be involved. A conflict would exist if the employee or any member of his or her immediate family had a financial or other interest in a firm otherwise eligible for the procurement action and that interest would result in personal benefit to the employee or family member.
- 3.3 University employees shall neither solicit, demand, nor accept any gift, favor, privilege, benefit, service, exemption, special discount, trip, employment, loan, gratuity, economic opportunity, or thing of value from any vendor, contractor, or party to a sub agreement that would result in personal benefit and/or that could

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influence the employee's official conduct. In cases where the appropriateness of the benefit may be in question, the benefit should not be accepted.

- 3.4 Any attempt to realize personal gain through conduct inconsistent with the proper discharge of the employee's duties to the university is a breach of the public trust and will subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination, as well as to the possibility of criminal charges.
- 3.5 University employees who, as a function of their job responsibilities, participate directly or indirectly in any procurement activity may not (nor shall any member of their immediate families:
 - 3.5.1 Acquire or maintain a direct financial relationship pertaining to the procurement.
 - 3.5.2 Acquire or maintain a direct financial relationship with a business or organization pertaining to the procurement.
 - 3.5.3 Enter into a negotiation or an arrangement concerning prospective employment with a person, business, or organization involved in any specific procurement in which the employee is involved.
- 3.6 A university employee shall not offer, give, or agree to give any individual or organization a gratuity, benefit, or offer of employment in connection with any procurement activity.
- 3.7 A university employee may not disclose confidential information obtained by reason of his or her position nor otherwise use such information for actual or anticipated personal gain or for the personal gain of any other person.
- 3.8 This policy allows the use of employee-authored textbooks or other intellectual property in the employee's courses.
- 3.9 All faculty and staff in a position to originate purchase requests or influence purchasing decisions shall annually complete a disclosure statement regarding related-party interests as required in UH System Administrative Memorandum 03.A.17, Disclosure of Related Party Interests.

4. PROCEDURES

- 4.1. There is an important distinction between a related-party interest and a conflict of interest. A related-party interest is a question of fact and results when an individual is in a position to personally benefit from transactions entered into by the University of Houston System. Whether such a transaction or relationship

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creates a conflict of interest requires a subjective evaluation of the facts and circumstances by the appropriate Vice President.

4.2. To avoid timing problems associated with annual reporting, it is suggested that before engaging in such activities administration, faculty, and staff members disclose in writing, through their department chairperson, to the Chancellor the nature and extent of planned related-party interests.

4.3. Department chairpersons and the Vice President shall review the disclosures and inform any faculty or staff member if their outside activity or relationship represents, or is believed to represent, a conflict of interest. Remedial action will be suggested when indicated.

5. EXHIBITS

There are no exhibits associated with this policy.

6. REVIEW PROCESS

Responsible Party: Vice President for Administration & Finance and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Review: Every three years on or before August 1st.

Signed original on file in Employment Services and Operations.

7. POLICY HISTORY

Issue #1: 11/01/99

Issue #2: 08/12/10

Issue #3: 09/16/14 – Reaffirmed as Issue #4

8. REFERENCES: UH System Administrative Memorandum 03.A.17

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06.A.03 Standards of Conduct in Government-Sponsored Research:
<https://www.uhd.edu/administration/employment-services-operations/resources/Documents/PS06A03.pdf>

Memo to: All UH-Downtown/PS Holders

UH-Downtown/PS 06.A.03

Issue No. 2

From: William Flores, President

Effective date: 08/17/15

Page 1 of 4

Subject: Standards of Conduct in Government-Sponsored Research

1. PURPOSE

This PS outlines the standards of procedure and conduct in Government-sponsored research adhered to by the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD). These standards are part of a joint statement of The Council of the American Association of University Professors and The American Council on Education. All University employees must abide by the procedures outlined herein to prevent conflicts of interest with outside parties, including government agencies.

2. DEFINITIONS

There are no definitions for this policy.

3. POLICY

3.1 Favoring of Outside Interests. When a University employee involved in government-sponsored work has a significant financial interest in, or a consulting arrangement with, a private business concern, actual or apparent conflicts of interest must be avoided between his government-sponsored University research obligations and his outside interests and other obligations. Situations in or from which conflicts of interest may arise are:

3.1.1 Undertaking or orientation of the employee's University research to serve the research or other needs of the private firm without disclosure of these activities to the University and to the sponsoring agency;

3.1.2 Purchase of major equipment, instruments, materials, or other items for University research from the private firm in which the employee has the interest without disclosure of such interest;

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3.1.3 Use for personal gain or to benefit a private entity of Government-sponsored work products, results, materials, records, or information that are not made generally available (This would not necessarily preclude appropriate licensing arrangements for inventions, or consulting on the basis of Government-sponsored research results where there is significant additional work by the employee independent of the Government-sponsored research);

3.1.4 Use for personal interest or other unauthorized use of privileged information acquired in connection with the employee's Government-sponsored activities. Privileged information includes, but is not limited to, medical, personnel or security records of individuals; anticipated material requirements of price actions; possible new sites for government operations; and knowledge of forthcoming programs or selection of contractors/subcontractors in advance of official notice.

3.1.5 Negotiation or influence upon the negotiation of contracts relating to the employee's Government-sponsored research between the University and private organizations with which the employee has consulting or other significant influence.

3.1.6 Acceptance of gratuities or special favors from private organizations with which the University does or may conduct business in connection with a Government-sponsored research project, or extension of gratuities or special favors to employees of the sponsoring Government agency, under circumstances which might reasonably be interpreted as an attempt to influence the recipients in the conduct of their duties.

3.2 Distribution of Effort. There should be a clear understanding, by all concerned parties, of the amount of time and responsibilities for which an employee is accountable, when involved in Government-sponsored research. A demonstrable relationship between the effort or responsibility proposed in the research agreement and the actual extent of the employee's involvement is expected in order to avoid any misconceptions of the amount of intellectual effort being devoted to the research in question.

3.3 Consulting for Government Agencies or their Contractors. When the University employee engaged in Government-sponsored research also serves as a consultant to a Federal agency, his/her conduct is subject to the provisions of the Conflict of Interest Statutes (18 U.S.C. 202-209 as amended). If the employee consults for one or more Government contractors, or prospective contractors, in the same technical field as his/her research project, care must be taken to avoid giving advice that may be of questionable objectivity because of its possible bearing on his/her other interests. In undertaking and performing consulting services, the employee shall make full disclosure of such interests to the University and to the contractor insofar as they may appear to relate to the work at the University for the contractor.

3.4 University Responsibilities. UHD recognizes that disclosure and consultation are the obligations assumed by the University when it accepts government funds for research. UHD will herein implement organizational and administrative actions to prevent conflicts of interest in Government-sponsored research.

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3.4.1 The Assistant Vice-President for Research and Sponsored Programs and the Principal Investigator will insure that all Government funds are expended for the purposes for which they are intended and that all services which are required in return for these funds are supplied.

3.4.2 Any UHD employee involved in Government-sponsored research must consult with the appropriate vice president before accepting any outside professional work to insure there will not be any real or perceived conflicts of interest with the research.

3.4.3 The AVP-ORSP or designee will serve as an informed source of advice and guidance for consultation on problems that may or do develop as a result of University employees' outside financial or consulting interests, as they relate to their participation in any Government-sponsored research.

3.4.4 All University employees participating in Government-sponsored research must abide by the standards outlined herein as well as those delineated in all Grant Administration policies (PS 06.A.xx).

4. PROCEDURES

4.1 Any UHD employee involved in government-sponsored research must consult with the appropriate vice president before accepting any outside professional work to insure there will not be any real or perceived conflicts of interest with the research.

4.2 The AVP-ORSP or designee will serve as an informed source of advice and guidance for consultation on problems that may or do develop as a result of University employees' outside financial or consulting interests, as they relate to their participation in any Government-sponsored research.

4.3 All University employees participating in government-sponsored research must abide by the standards outlined herein as well as those delineated in all Grant Administration policies (PS 06.A.06).

5. EXHIBITS

There are no exhibits associated with this policy.

6. REVIEW PROCESS

Responsible Party (Reviewer): Assistant Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs

Review: Every three years on or before May 1st.

Signed original on file in Employment Services and Operations.

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7. POLICY HISTORY

Issue #1: 05/02/01

8. REFERENCES

There are no references for this policy.

06.A.04 Procurement Integrity Policy
<https://www.uhd.edu/administration/employment-services-operations/resources/Documents/PS06A04.pdf>

Memo to: All UH-Downtown/PS Holders

From: William Flores, President

Subject: Procurement Integrity Policy

UH-Downtown/PS 06.A.04

Issue No. 2

Effective date: 08/17/15

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1. PURPOSE

This PS outlines the prohibited actions by of University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) personnel who have any role in the development and submission of proposals to federal agencies and/or negotiations of any contracts.

2. DEFINITIONS

There are no definitions for this policy.

3. POLICY

3.1 Section 27 of the OFPP Acts Amendment of 1988, entitled “Procurement Integrity” prohibits certain activities by universities and their personnel, especially principal investigators and administrative officials, while the government is reviewing proposals in anticipation of making an award. This law affects the interaction of University personnel with program and procurement officials in the federal government. It may also affect the interaction of University personnel as consultants to any governmental agency.

3.2 Activities which University personnel are prohibited from engaging in are as follow:

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- 3.2.1 Discuss any potential future employment of government officials;
- 3.2.2 Provide anything of value to governmental officials or their families;
- 3.2.3 Offer any money, gratuity, or other thing of value to any procurement officer; or
- 3.2.4 Solicit proprietary or source selection information from governmental officials.

3.3 If the proposed award is \$100,000 per year or more, the Assistant Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs when required by the sponsor shall file, concurrent with submission of the proposal and/or the award, a certification concerning procurement integrity by the University.

3.4 Violation of these regulations will result in loss of contract awards (or a part thereof), and may result in suspension or debarment from receipt of any federal awards.

4. PROCEDURES

There are no procedures associated with this policy.

5. EXHIBITS

There are no exhibits associated with this policy.

Exhibit B (PS 06.A.04), University of Houston-Downtown, Certification Regarding Procurement Integrity (Federal Contracts and Grants), was deleted from this policy.

6. REVIEW PROCESS

Responsible Party (Reviewer): Assistant Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs

Review: Biennial

President

7. POLICY HISTORY

Issue #1: 08/01/1994

8. REFERENCES

There are no references for this policy.

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06.A.07 Ethical Conduct in Research and Government-Sponsored Activities

<https://www.uhd.edu/administration/employment-services-operations/resources/Documents/PS06A07.pdf>

Memo to: All UH-Downtown/PS Holders

UH-Downtown/PS 06.A.07

Issue No. 3

From: Dr. Juan Sánchez Muñoz, President

Effective Date: 02/12/2020

Page 1 of 8

Subject: Misconduct in Research, Scholarly, Creative, and Government Sponsored Activities

1. PURPOSE

All members of the university community are expected to follow standards for conduct of scientific, scholarly, creative, and research activities, including but not limited to, faithful representation of data, accepting responsibility for the integrity of all work undertaken and reported individually or collectively, and accurate disclosure of all facts pertaining to all education and research and scholarly/creative activities.

This PS states the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) policy and procedures for promoting ethical behavior in all research, scholarly and creative activities, and government-sponsored activities, and outlines how to handle allegations of scientific misconduct. This policy does not address items such as differences in interpretation or judgment of data, scholarly or political disagreements, personal or professional opinions, or private, moral or ethical behavior or views.

This policy applies to the body of research, scholarly, or creative activity done during an individual's period of employment at the university; this policy operates independently from all other relevant review processes (including annual reviews and promotion and tenure). Misconduct committed prior to the date of this policy will be subject to the definition of misconduct in policy at the time of the misconduct, though procedure will operate under the current policy version.

Given the serious nature and implications of any allegations of misconduct, the university expects any individual(s) involved in any part of the reporting, inquiry, or investigation of alleged misconduct to act in good faith and maintain confidentiality.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other material deviation from practices commonly accepted in the academic and scientific communities for proposing, conducting, or reporting results from education, research, and scholarly or creative activities. Misconduct also refers to retaliation against a person who, acting in good faith, reports or

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provides information about suspected or alleged misconduct. Misconduct compromises the integrity of the individual, colleagues, and/or organization. All levels of misconduct, whether intentional or unintentional, are subject to disciplinary action as described in this policy.

2.1.1 Self-plagiarism, otherwise known as text recycling or text reuse, “occurs when sections of the same text appear (usually unattributed) in more than one of an author’s own publications.” (Committee on Publication Ethics, 2013)

2.1.2 Fabrication is making up data or results that are recorded and/or reported as authentic.

2.1.3 Falsification is the manipulating of research materials, equipment, processes to misrepresent data or findings, or omitting data or results such that the research and its results are not accurately represented.

2.1.4 A ghost author is someone “who is omitted from an authorship list despite qualifying for authorship.” (Committee on Publication Ethics, 2013)

2.1.5 A guest or gift author is someone “who is listed as an author despite not qualifying for authorship.” (Committee on Publication Ethics, 2013).

2.1.6 Material deviations from practices that are commonly accepted in the academic and scientific communities include unethical authorship practices (gift authorship, ghost authorship, or omitting authors who have made a substantive/bona fide (see section 3.3) contribution to the work in question) in all forums and venues, falsifying time and effort reports associated with sponsored programs, forging of authorizing signatures associated with the work, misrepresenting an individual’s qualifications, failure to obtain prior approval for human subjects research or animal research intended for publication or presentation, and deviation from other practices commonly agreed upon within the disciplines. [See section 3.3 for role of disciplinary faculty in identifying discipline-specific expectations.].

2.2 Inquiry is defined as a stage of preliminary information-gathering and initial fact-finding to determine whether an allegation or apparent instance of misconduct warrants an investigation. All inquiry interviews will be digitally recorded.

2.3 Investigation is a formal examination and evaluation of relevant facts to determine whether misconduct has taken place or, if misconduct has already been confirmed, to assess its extent and consequences and/or to determine appropriate action. All investigation hearings will be digitally recorded.

2.4 Relevant Parties is defined as the person(s) against whom the allegations were made, the person making the allegations, and the funding agency (if a government-sponsored activity).

2.5 Conflict of Interest is defined as per SAM 02.A.09.

2.6 Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any adverse employment or educational action taken for making a report of misconduct or otherwise participating under this Policy.

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3. POLICY

3.1 All members of the University community have the responsibility to report those activities which they believe constitute misconduct, either directly to the Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and Provost (SVPASA) or through the UH System anonymous fraud system. Such individuals reporting in good faith may not be subject to retaliation, and, as per the SAM 01.C.04, are protected by the Texas Whistleblower Act. As part of the protection of these individuals, the SVPASA may choose to notify the individual's chair and dean to be watchful (without providing specifics of the allegation).

Any actual or threatened retaliation or any act of intimidation to prevent or otherwise obstruct the reporting of academic misconduct or violation of this policy or the participation in proceedings relating to academic misconduct may be considered a separate violation of this or other UHD Policies.

3.2 All research and government-sponsored activities in which members of the University community engage shall be conducted according to the standards recognized in the academy for collegiate education, research, and scholarly/creative activities.

3.3 As part of the review of Annual Evaluation and Rank and Tenure criteria, all tenured and tenure-track faculty in each department must articulate expectations and definitions of what constitutes a "bona fide" role in scholarly work that would warrant authorship or similar credit, as well as identify any other expectations particular to the discipline(s) housed within the department. Each discipline within a department may develop and submit separate expectations and definitions; all expectations and definitions should be reviewed and voted on by all tenured and tenure-track faculty within the discipline or department. Faculty may consult or reference external professional organizations or resources as part of this task.

The Department Chair should ensure that the faculty undertake this task each year. All expectations and definitions must be reviewed annually and included with the Rank and Tenure Criteria, submitted no later than December 15 to the college dean and SVPASA as per PS 10.A.01.

3.4 All allegations of misconduct involving any sponsored program must be reported to the appropriate sponsoring agency as per the agency's guidelines, including science and/or engineering activities funded by the Public Health Service, the National Institutes of Health, and/or the National Science Foundation, must be reported according to the steps delineated in the procedures of these organizations.

3.5 If at any point during the inquiry or investigation phase the number of allegations and/or respondents expands beyond the capacity for executing the procedures of this policy as defined below, the Inquiry Team or the Investigating Committee (IC) may request that the SVPASA, in consultation with the President, expand timelines, resources, and personnel to accommodate the expanded scope.

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4. PROCEDURES

4.1 Allegations of misconduct must be reported in writing to the SVPASA or through the UH System anonymous fraud reporting system for review and action. If the SVPASA has a possible conflict of interest, the allegation must be reported to the President. In such instances, duties assigned to the SVPASA in implementing this policy will be implemented by the President.

4.2 Interim administrative action may be taken by the university and/or the awarding agency upon receipt of allegations of misconduct scientific, scholarly, creative, and research activities. The SVPASA will authorize an inquiry into the suspected or alleged misconduct and determine whether the allegations warrant further investigation as violations of University policy. Within five working days of the receipt of a misconduct allegation, the SVPASA must appoint an Inquiry Team and give the team a timeline for completion and reporting (see section 4.3). The Inquiry Team will include the a representative from the Provost's Office who carries faculty rank along with two faculty members chosen from a pool of four faculty; the pool of four will consist of one elected tenured faculty member from each college, elected by Faculty Senate procedures for two-year terms.

4.3 The duration of the inquiry period will be 60 to 90 working days determined by the SVPASA at the beginning of the inquiry, depending on the complexity of the case. The inquiry timeline should be as timely as possible while allowing for due process and labor of individuals involved. The inquiry must include a meeting with the subject(s) of the allegation within 10 days after the Inquiry Team has been appointed. At that meeting, the Inquiry Team will inform the subject(s) about the timeline for this phase and provide a brief overview of this policy and process.

The inquiry should provide information sufficient to make a recommendation but need not provide exhaustive coverage of the allegation. This inquiry will result in the Inquiry Report minimally containing the following information:

- Date inquiry was initiated and date completed;
- Name and title of the person(s) against whom the allegations were made;
- General nature of the allegations;
- The application/grant number (if a government-funded activity);
- Evidence reviewed and persons interviewed; and
- Conclusions. (A recommendation to dismiss, expand, or amend the allegation(s) or proceed with a formal investigation.)

4.4 Within 10 working days of receiving the Inquiry Report, the SVPASA will notify in writing relevant parties of the decision—either to dismiss the allegations or to move to an investigation. At this time, the SVPASA will provide a copy of the Inquiry Report to the subject(s) of the allegation(s). All evidence and materials related to the inquiry shall be maintained by the Office of SVPASA for seven years after termination of the inquiry.

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4.5 Within 30 working days after the SVPASA makes a decision to initiate a formal investigation, the SVPASA will appoint an IC. The SVPASA will make available to the IC the inquiry report along with all supporting materials collected during the inquiry. The members of the IC will be appointed by the SVPASA in consultation with the Chief Integrity Officer or a similar member of the Provost's Office who carries faculty rank and the President of the Faculty Senate (or Senate President-elect in cases of conflict of interest or availability). The IC will consist of at least two tenured faculty representatives from each of the four academic colleges as well as the Chief Integrity Officer or other representative from the Provost's Office who carries faculty rank as an ex officio member.

4.6 The IC will meet within 10 working days of being appointed. At its first meeting, the IC will elect a chair from the appointed faculty members to handle procedural and administrative matters, as well as communicate the membership of the IC to the subject(s) of the investigation. The IC will also receive an orientation from the Provost and General Counsel regarding all relevant department, college, and university policies and documents. The investigative phase will begin at the meeting of the IC. The length of the investigative phase will be commensurate with the complexity of the allegations, number of subjects and witnesses in the investigation, and amount of evidence to be reviewed. The length of the investigative phase will be documented in the charge to the IC with justification by the Provost, with a maximum of 120 days.

4.7 In the course of the investigation, the IC will investigate and address all allegations of misconduct identified in the original allegation(s), and those that arise as a result of the inquiry and investigative process. The IC may conduct interviews, seek advice, request materials, or seek testimony material to the case.

4.8 The IC shall insure confidentiality of all related proceedings to the extent possible and shall undertake diligent efforts to protect the position, anonymity, and reputation of all parties in the investigation.

4.9 As part of its process, the IC must invite the subject(s) of the allegation to appear before the IC. If the subject(s) chooses to meet with the IC, he/she/they will be given sufficient time to present his/her/their case, which may include documents, written arguments, witnesses, and/or statements from external parties (which must be verifiable by the IC). The IC may ask questions of the subject(s) and any witnesses during this meeting. At this meeting, the subject(s) may have legal counsel or an advisor but must speak for himself/herself/themselves. Written notification of the presence of legal counsel or an advisor by either the IC or the subject(s) must be provided to all parties at least one week in advance of the planned meeting. The subject(s) of the allegation will have access to all evidence available to the IC, including recordings of interviews with other parties. The subject(s) may also submit information to the IC at any point during the investigation phase. The subject(s) of the investigation may communicate with the elected IC chair or the Chief Integrity Officer or other provost's office IC representative regarding questions or concerns about the process, or contact the UHD Faculty Ombuds. If those individuals cannot address the questions or concerns, they will suggest an alternate source.

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4.10 A record of the proceedings and all related documentation shall be maintained by the IC chair throughout the investigative process. All interviews conducted as part of the investigation will be recorded. Breach of confidentiality by relevant parties may be grounds for action under existing university policy or procedure.

4.11 Within the given timeframe for the investigation, the IC will conclude its work, and issue a formal report summarizing its findings and conclusions with respect to all allegations of misconduct, which may include a majority and minority report. The formal IC report is an advisory document for the SVPASA, who will consider the report along with other policy violations, or findings of misconduct for each subject. The formal IC report, the record of the proceedings and all related documentation will be forwarded to the SVPASA. Within 10 working days of receiving the IC report, the SVPASA will forward copies of the report to the relevant parties.

4.12 All documentation related to the inquiry and investigation proceedings shall be retained for seven years in the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and Provost.

4.13 Penalties and Appeals

4.13.1 Within 20 working days of receipt of the report, the SVPASA shall weigh the collected evidence, testimony, and findings of the inquiry and investigation to determine whether research misconduct has occurred. The SVPASA may consult with IC as part of this review. Consonant with the seriousness and intentionality of the offense, if the SVPASA determines that misconduct has occurred, the SVPASA may impose disciplinary measures which include, but are not limited to, a written notice to the employee, withholding of pay raises for a period of time, notification of the offense to pertinent organizations and publishers, or initiating dismissal procedures within the regulations of the University. The sanctions must be communicated in writing to the subject(s) of the investigation. If misconduct occurs related to any sponsored program, the SVPASA will notify the sponsoring agency as per the agency's guidelines. The SVPASA will notify the IC and parties whose decisions may need to consider such information including Rank and Tenure Committees, Department Chair, and Dean, of any sanctions.

14.13.2 Sanctions imposed by the funding agency, if misconduct occurs in a government-sponsored activity, range from minimal restrictions to suspension or termination of an active award, loss of funding and/or debarment or suspension of an individual, a department, or the University from participating in government-sponsored programs.

14.13.3 The subject of the investigation may appeal the sanctions imposed to the President. This written appeal must occur within 30 working days of the receipt of the sanctions. The President has 30 working days to render a written decision on the appeal. The President's decision will be final and binding.

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5. REVIEW PROCESS

Responsible Party (Reviewer): Assistant Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs

Review: Every three years on or before May 1st.

Signed original on file in Employment Services and Operations.

6. POLICY HISTORY

Issue #1: 10/16/95

Issue #2: 08/17/15

Issue #3: 02/12/20

8. REFERENCES

Committee on Publication Ethics. (2013). How to spot authorship problems.

Committee on Publication Ethics. (n.d.) Text Recycling Guidelines.

SAM 02.A.09

SAM 01.C.04

PS 03.A.23

PS 10.A.01

PS 10.A.05

MAP 02.A.08 Consulting and Paid Professional Services
Policy signed by University President on 06-18-21

I. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The University of Houston-Clear Lake recognizes that consulting and other paid professional services are an accepted part of academic life, and that often such services by faculty or exempt staff benefit both the employee and the University of Houston-Clear Lake, through enhanced knowledge, exposure, and experience. Outside consulting also, however, carries the potential to create conflicts between outside professional activities and an employee's primary duty to the University. This document prescribes the regulations to be followed to ensure compliance with Board Policy [57.02, Consulting and Paid Professional Service](#), as well as state laws, and to assist the employee in managing or eliminating potential conflicts.
- 1.2. For the purposes of this document, consulting and paid professional service is defined as an activity undertaken for remuneration from a third party, where the activity is related to the functions or expertise for which the individual is compensated by the University of Houston-Clear Lake.
- 1.3. This document applies to all full-time, benefits-eligible faculty and exempt staff.

II. POLICY

- 2.1. The fundamental premise of this policy is that each full-time employee has an obligation to place their responsibilities to the University of Houston-Clear Lake above any other professional responsibilities. Consulting or other paid professional service of employees is considered a secondary activity that may be engaged in only after their duties and responsibilities to the University of Houston-Clear Lake are fulfilled. Outside activities should not absorb an undue amount of time and thereby interfere with the performance of an employee's duties with the University of Houston-Clear Lake.
- 2.2. External consulting or other paid professional service by full-time, benefits-eligible members of the faculty and exempt staff is necessarily restricted to activities that do not create a conflict of interest, time, or commitment with University of Houston-Clear Lake responsibilities. Such conflicts would include the inducement to disclose confidential information or the impairment of the employee's judgment in the performance of component university duties. This privilege is subject in all instances to the conditions set forth below. Failure to comply with this policy may subject an employee to disciplinary action including reprimand, suspension, or termination.

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- 2.2.1. The first responsibility of the individual is to the University of Houston-Clear Lake. Outside professional obligations should not interfere with the employee's full-time commitment to the University of Houston-Clear Lake.
- 2.2.2. No outside obligation should result in any conflict of interest involving the individual's responsibilities to the University of Houston-Clear Lake or to its programs, policies, and objectives. Even the appearance of conflict may be detrimental to both the employee and the University of Houston-Clear Lake, therefore the University seeks to assist employees in avoiding actual or potential conflicts of interest in their consulting and other professional agreements. See [SAM 02.A.09 - Conflict of Interest](#).
- 2.2.3. Use of University of Houston-Clear Lake facilities, space, equipment, or support staff for consulting or other paid professional activities is permitted only if a financial arrangement that adequately covers the costs involved has been concluded between the individual and the administration prior to the employee's beginning the outside consulting or other paid professional service.
- 2.2.4. Individuals may not represent themselves as acting in the capacity of University of Houston-Clear Lake employees when conducting consulting or other paid professional activities. The University of Houston-Clear Lake bears no responsibility for any actual or implied obligations or liabilities incurred by the individual resulting from the consulting or other paid professional agreement or activity.
- 2.2.5. The responsibility to recognize and avoid conflicts of interest resides primarily with the individual employee. To assist in that endeavor, the University of Houston-Clear Lake requires faculty who wish to arrange consulting or other paid professional activities to provide prior notification to their respective dean. Review by their dean, or equivalent, of such activities shall include consideration of any real or apparent conflict of interest and the benefit of the proposed service to the University of Houston-Clear Lake and the System. The dean may disapprove such activities if they conflict with primary University of Houston-Clear Lake duties. The Consulting and Paid Professional Service Application Form for documentation can be found at this location:
<https://www.uhcl.edu/humanresources/documents/forms/consultingform2016.pdf>
Each faculty member who engages in consulting or other paid professional service, including teaching on a temporary basis at other institutions, must ensure that such activities do not require commitments of time averaging more than one day per calendar week (i.e., one day in seven), and must arrange such activities so as not to interfere with the employee's University obligations, including but not limited to regularly scheduled classes.

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- 2.2.6. Exempt staff wishing to arrange consulting or other paid professional activities must obtain prior written approval from the appropriate supervisor; such outside consulting must be justified on an individual basis and may not create a conflict of interest, time, or commitment with University of Houston-Clear Lake responsibilities. The Consulting and Paid Professional Service Application Form for documentation can be found at this location: <https://www.uhcl.edu/humanresources/documents/forms/consultingform2016.pdf>
- 2.2.7. When any of an individual's salary is paid from funds for externally sponsored activities, the time allowable for consultation or other paid professional activities must comply with sponsor requirements.
- 2.3. Authorizations for absences from an employee's official place of duty because of outside consulting or other paid professional service shall be requested and approved in accordance with the university regulations governing leave entitlements.
- 2.4. The Standards of Conduct of State Officers and Employees, which are provided by state law, deal with the conflict of an employee's private interests with the interests of the state of Texas. Any employee who violates such standards through a consultation or other paid professional service is subject to dismissal from employment with the University of Houston-Clear Lake, regardless of whether an application to engage in such an activity has been approved. Such dismissal will be processed according to applicable discipline and dismissal procedures.
- 2.5. Unpaid public service is not included in this policy; occasional lectures that include fees are also not included, unless these activities require significant amounts of time or otherwise conflict with regular University of Houston-Clear Lake obligations.
- 2.6. An employee may not accept an honorarium or any fees or gifts in consideration for any services performed in his or her official capacity on behalf of the University (excluding travel expense reimbursements)
- 2.7. The University shall establish a process for monitoring outside paid professional activities of their faculty and exempt staff in order to ensure that such activities are consistent with this policy and also serve University of Houston-Clear Lake purposes.

III. ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION

Work performed for the University outside the employee's normal duties and outside normal work hours is considered an overload assignment. The University shall establish

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a process for monitoring assignments of its faculty and staff to ensure that such activities are consistent with this document, serve institutional purposes, and are compliant with applicable law(s) with respect to employee compensation.

IV. MULTIPLE EMPLOYMENTS

Work performed for another component university of the University of Houston System within the scope of activities, functions, or expertise for which the component university compensates the individual is considered consulting or outside employment. Consulting activities must be non-regular, part-time appointments or temporary appointments as defined in [SAM 02.A.34 - Types of Staff Employment](#). Prior written approval to engage in these activities is required. Compensation for these services must be made through the university's payroll at University of Houston-Clear Lake and are subject to withholding and other payroll deductions.

V. DUAL OFFICE HOLDING

The Board of Regents must grant approval before any officer of the System or its component institutions may accept an offer to serve in another non-elective office consistent with Board Policy 57.04, and all applicable laws. Approval must include a formal finding that the officer has satisfied the requirements of Article XVI, Section 40, of the Texas Constitution.

VI. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible Party:

Executive Director for Human Resources Review:

Every five years on or before September 1

<https://www.uhcl.edu/policies/documents/human-resources/consulting-outside-employment-policy.pdf>

MAP 02.A.09 Conflict of Interest

Policy signed by University President on 06-18-21

I. PURPOSE

Although the University of Houston-Clear Lake depends upon the integrity and discretion of its staff with respect to actual or apparent conflict of interest, all University

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of Houston - Clear Lake employees are expected to obey all federal, state and local laws. This administrative memorandum presents requirements to avoid conflicts of interest in accordance with Texas Government Code [Section 572.051](#), [Texas Education Code 51.9337](#), Board of Regents Policies, including [57.01](#), [57.02](#), [57.04](#), [57.05](#) and [57.08](#) and the University of Houston System Administrative Memorandum.

II. POLICY

2.1. Conflict of interest is the use of one's University of Houston - Clear Lake employment to obtain unauthorized privileges, benefits, or things of value for oneself or others.

2.2. Guidelines to avoid conflict of interest include the following:

2.2.1 No employee shall solicit, accept, or agree to accept any privilege, benefit or thing of value for the exercise of his or her discretion, influence or powers as an employee except as is allowed by law.

2.2.2 No employee shall accept any privilege, benefit or thing of value that might tend to influence him or her in the discharge of his or her duties as an employee.

2.2.3 No employee shall use his or her position to secure special privileges or exemptions for himself or herself or others, except as is allowed by law.

2.2.4 No employee may be an officer, agent, employee, or member of, or own an interest in a professional activity that foreseeably might require or induce him or her to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of his/her University of Houston-Clear Lake position.

2.2.5 No employee shall accept employment or engage in any business or professional activity which foreseeably might require or induce him or her to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of his/her University of Houston-Clear Lake position.

2.2.6 No employee shall disclose confidential information gained by reason of his or her university position, nor shall he or she otherwise use such information for his or her personal gain or benefit.

2.2.7 No employee shall transact any business for the University of Houston-Clear Lake with any entity of which he or she is an officer, agent, employee, or member, or in which he or she has a direct or indirect financial or other interest.

2.2.8 No employee shall make personal investments in any enterprise which foreseeably might create a substantial conflict between his or her private interests and the University of Houston-Clear Lake's interests.

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE POLICIES

- 2.2.9 No employee shall accept other employment which might impair his or her independence or judgment in the performance of his or her University of Houston-Clear Lake duties.
- 2.2.10 No employee shall receive any compensation for his or her services to the University of Houston-Clear Lake from any source other than the State of Texas except as is allowed by law.
- 2.2.11 No employee who exercises discretion in connection with contracts, purchases, payments, claims or other pecuniary transactions shall solicit, accept or agree to accept any benefit from a person or entity the employee knows, or should know, is or is likely to become financially interested in such transactions.
- 2.2.12 No employee shall ask the University to accept a gift, grant, donation, or other consideration to be used as a salary supplement without the prior written approval of the recipient's immediate superior, the office of the general counsel and the president, and written authorization of the internal auditor, who shall report the necessary information to the State Auditor.
- 2.2.13 No employee shall 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.
- 2.2.14 Each employee who is involved in procurement or in contract management shall disclose to the agency any potential conflict of interest specified by state law or University policy that is known by the employee with respect to any contract with a private vendor or bid for the purchase of goods or services from a private vendor with the University.
- 2.2.15 No employee shall have a direct or indirect financial or other interest, shall engage in a business transaction or professional activity, or shall incur any obligation that is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of the employee's duties for the institution.
- 2.2.16 No employee shall act as an agent for another person in the negotiation of the terms of an agreement relating to the provision of money, services, or property to the institution.
- 2.2.17 Each employee shall use the resources of the University of Houston-Clear Lake only in accordance with university policies and applicable law.
- 2.2.18 Any employee who is an officer, agent, employee or member of, or owns a direct or indirect financial or other interest in any entity doing business with any university of the University of Houston System must disclose such relationship in writing to his or her immediate superior.

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- 2.3. Failure of an employee to comply with the foregoing or with applicable law shall constitute grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

III. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible Party: Executive Director for Human Resources

Review: Every five years on or before June 1

Ira K. Blake

Title: President

University of Houston-Clear Lake

Approval Date: June 18, 2021

Sunset Date: June 18, 2026

<https://www.uhcl.edu/policies/documents/human-resources/conflict-of-interest.pdf>

MAP 02.A.21 Nepotism

Policy signed by University President on 07-09-21

I. PURPOSE

This document sets forth the University of Houston - Clear Lake policy on nepotism, and requires compliance with State of Texas statutes, Board of Regents Policy 57.07, and regulations regarding unfair employment practices due to nepotism. This administrative memorandum applies to all positions, full and part-time, regular and temporary, in all university programs, regardless of funding source.

II. POLICY

2.1 Relatives of members of the Board of Regents shall not be employed by the System, which includes the University of Houston - Clear Lake, unless the employment took place at least one year prior to the appointment of the Board member.

2.2. No Person shall be employed by the University of Houston - Clear Lake if they are a relative of the employee who has the official authority to hire or recommend or approve the hiring, salary or promotions of the relative. Relatives shall not be employed in the supervisory-subordinate relationship even if it results from marriage after the employment relationship was formed.

2.3 The provisions of this policy apply to all system programs, regardless of funding source.

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III. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Nepotism: Favoritism in employment shown to a relative.

3.2 Relative: For this administrative memorandum, the term “relative” is defined as anyone related to the employee within the second degree of affinity or the third degree of consanguinity and includes the following relations:

- The employee’s spouse.
- The employee or the spouse’s natural and adopted children, parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, brothers, sisters, half brothers and sisters, grand-children, great-grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, first cousins, second cousins and persons married to them

IV. PENALTIES

Violation of the nepotism statutes is a misdemeanor involving official misconduct; employees violating the statute are subject to a fine and dismissal from employment. An employee who violates this administrative memorandum - as an employee knowingly approving the hiring of a relative, as the currently employed relative, or as the relative being hired - is subject to reassignment and/or to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

III. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible Party: Executive Director for Human Resources

Review: Every five years

Ira K. Blake

Title: President

University of Houston-Clear Lake

Approval Date: July 9, 2021

02.A.29 Ethical Conduct of Employees

<http://www.uh.edu/af/universityservices/policies/sam/2HumanResources/2A29.pdf>

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UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM

SECTION: Human Resources

NUMBER: 02.A.29

AREA: General

SUBJECT: Ethical Conduct of Employees

2. PURPOSE

- 1.1. New federal and state laws and regulations, together with growing scrutiny of the complex relationships between individuals, public institutions and outside public and private organizations, necessitate the clarification of standards of accountability for public servants. Requirements for ethical behavior are especially important in public institutions of higher education; component university employees are accountable to taxpayers for the use of public funds and also have the responsibility to educate and lead component university students by example.
- 1.2. University of Houston System employees have a responsibility to the public in the performance of their official duties. High institutional and personal standards of conduct must be maintained to fulfill that responsibility. These standards must include avoiding any actions that would create the appearance of violation of laws or ethical principles. This document sets forth a code of accountability for component university employees in the performance of their component university responsibilities; it identifies areas of particular legal and ethical concern and specifies requirements for compliance with state laws, federal guidelines, Board of Regents policies, standards of ethics, and good business practices.

2. POLICY

- 2.1. Employees of the System shall avoid using their positions for purposes that are, or give the appearance of being, motivated by a desire for private gain for themselves or others, such as those with whom they have family, business, or other ties. University employees shall exercise the utmost good faith in all transactions, activities, and behaviors related to their duties to the System and its property and resources. The principles of good faith and honest dealing apply to all aspects of the employee's responsibilities and activities on the part of the university, not just those identified in this directive as subject to particular statutes or causes for particular concern.
- 2.2. Prior to entering into any consulting, investment, professional or other arrangement that may involve a conflict of interest or commitment, a faculty or exempt employee must submit to the university or department head a complete written disclosure of the pending relationship and any potential conflicts that it may involve. The subsequent arrangements will then be subject to the approval of the appropriate dean, associate vice president, associate vice chancellor, or designee. This provision applies to all regular faculty and exempt staff and to non-exempt staff with procurement or research responsibilities.

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- 2.3. On an annual basis, all non-University business activities and arrangements shall be reported to the Chancellor through the Senior Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance.
- 2.4. University employees shall promptly disclose to their supervisor or department head any substantiated information regarding what they believe to constitute a violation of this document or any law or institutional policy.
- 2.5. Failure to comply with the principles outlined in this document shall be considered a breach of the public trust and may subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, as well as to the possibility of criminal action.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. Benefit: Anything an independent third party observer might reasonably regard to provide a monetary gain or advantage. For the purposes of this policy, a benefit would include, but is not limited to, monetary gifts, meals, employment, or other items of significant gain or advantage. When the appropriateness of a benefit is in question, it should not be accepted.
- 3.2. Conflict of commitment: A situation in which an employee's outside activities interfere with the employee's primary commitment of time and intellectual energies to the University, or in which a full-time employee's primary professional loyalty is not to the System. The general permitted limit to external commitments is one day per calendar week, never to conflict with the employee's scheduled classes or other duties and responsibilities.
- 3.3. Conflict of interest: A situation in which there is a divergence between the employee's private interests and the employee's professional obligations to the university (i.e., the public interest) such that an independent observer might reasonably question whether the employee's actions or decisions are determined by considerations of private gain, financial or otherwise, to the university's detriment.
- 3.4. Family: Includes a family member related to an employee or official within the second degree by affinity or consanguinity. A family member under this definition includes the following relatives of the employee or official: child, parent, spouse, sister, brother, grandchild, grandparent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepson, stepdaughter, stepmother, stepfather, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, spouse's grandparent, spouse's grandchild, grandchild's spouse, or the spouse of a grandparent.
- 3.5. Honoraria: A payment for speech, lecture, or services on which, by custom or agreement, a specific price may not be set. For the purposes of this policy, this definition includes any payment from an outside entity for services such as making a speech, teaching a class or workshop, or providing consulting services.
- 3.6. Relatives: Individual laws prescribe the relationships covered in specific provisions.

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- 3.7. System Employee: An employee of the System is an individual who performs services that are subject to the will and control of the university in terms of what must be done and how it must be done within legal parameters. For purposes of this document, the term "employee" refers to any individual serving in a faculty, research or staff capacity subject to the terms and conditions described above. An employee is paid through the payroll system, with accompanying tax withholding as provided by law.

4. PROVISIONS

- 4.1. Acceptance of gifts or other benefits: An employee of the System (or member of the employee's family) may not solicit or accept any gift, favor, privilege, benefit, service, exemption or thing of value that might influence the employee to perform his or her job differently. An employee should assume that anyone having business with the university as a client, contractor, or vendor is likely to be seen as attempting to curry favor if that person provides any gift or benefit to the employee. More detailed directives related to conflict of interest may be found in Board Policy 57.08 and SAM 02.A.09 - Conflict of Interest.

The only gifts and benefits not subject to this restriction are those conferred on account of kinship or a personal or professional relationship independent of employee's status, non-cash items of less than \$50.00 in value, and those used solely to defray expenses accrued in the performance of official duties that are not reimbursable by the university.

- 4.2. Bribery: A university employee commits the criminal offense of bribery if the employee solicits, offers or accepts any benefit in exchange for a decision, opinion, recommendation, vote or other exercise of discretion by the employee.
- 4.3. Business, investments, and professional activity: An employee or the employee's family shall not make personal investments in any enterprise that foreseeably might create a significant conflict between the employee's private interests and the University's interests. An employee shall not transact any business for the University with any entity of which he or she is an owner, officer, agent, employee or member or in which the employee or the employee's family has a financial or other interest or accrues any benefit.
- 4.4. Charitable or professional organizations/pro bono work: Any contribution of time without compensation to charitable or professional organizations or causes that may infringe upon the employee's regular work hours must be disclosed to the employee's department head and must not interfere with the individual's University responsibilities.
- 4.5. Disclosure of confidential information: No university employee shall disclose confidential information gained by reason of his or her position, nor shall the employee otherwise use such information for personal gain or benefit. Similarly, no employee shall accept other employment or engage in any business or professional activity that foreseeably might require or induce the employee to disclose confidential information acquired through his or her position.

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4.6. Dual employment: A System employee may hold another non-elective state or federal office or position of honor, trust, or profit only after being granted prior approval. The Board delegates to the Chancellor or designee the authority to approve such dual office holding by any System employee who is not an officer of the System or its universities. Officers of the System are defined as executive management employees serving in the following positions: Chancellor, vice chancellor, General Counsel, president, vice president, dean (academic), Chief Audit Executive, and their equivalents (e.g., an administrative head of a recognized department reporting directly to the Chancellor or university president). Such approval must be based on formal findings that the dual office holding is of benefit to the state or is required by state or federal law and that the situation creates no conflict of interest or commitment.

4.7. Governmental appearances or expert witness service: University employees appearing before Congress or the Texas Legislature or their agencies, committees, or members to offer testimony, opinions or commentary in regard to existing or potential laws, rules or regulations, unless expressly authorized to do so by the Board or the Chancellor, must clearly state in advance that they are appearing in their individual capacities and that their testimony, opinions and commentary are not authorized by and must not be construed as reflecting upon the position of the System.

Appearances as an expert witness by any employee of the System shall be subject to the provisions of SAM 02.D.07 - Expert Witness Services.

4.8. Honoraria: By state law, a university employee may not solicit, agree to accept, or accept an honorarium in consideration for services the employee would not have been asked to provide but for his or her official position; i.e., for providing services on behalf of the university. This prohibition includes a payment made to a third party if made in exchange of the employee's services. This restriction applies to any fee for any service provided in the employee's official capacity, but does not apply to food, transportation and lodging in connection with the service provided.

4.9. Lobbying by state employees, political campaigns, holding public office, and other political activities: The General Appropriations Act prohibits the use of state funds to influence the outcome of any election or any legislative measure. Likewise, this act restricts the use of any university funds to hire lobbyists and provides restrictions against offering gifts to legislators and accepting gifts from legislators. Similarly, federal restrictions prohibit the use of federal funds to influence federal legislation. The Vice Chancellor for Governmental Relations shall be responsible for the general coordination of System governmental activities.

No university employee may use his or her authority, influence, or time during University work hours to affect the result of any election or political campaign or to achieve any other political purpose. Likewise, University funds, equipment, or other resources may not be used to work on a political campaign. University employees may run for local elective office and serve as elected public officials so long as campaign activities are not

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conducted during official university hours and so long as the office does not involve a political party primary or a party affiliation. The employee must provide prior notification to his or her supervisor of the candidacy and election to office.

- 4.10. Nepotism: Relatives of university employees may not be employed in positions where the employee has the official authority to hire or recommend or approve the hiring, salary, or promotion of the relative, even if it results from marriage after the employment relationship was formed. The requirements of nepotism statutes may be found in Board Policy 57.07 and SAM 02.A.21 - Nepotism.

- 8.11. Outside consulting or other employment: The System expects employees to accord a full professional commitment to the university during the terms of their appointments. Interaction between employees and external entities for reasonable periods of time and for personal remuneration may be desirable when the relationship benefits the University, enhances the professional skills of the employee, or constitutes a public service.

However, no employee shall accept consulting or external employment, that might impair his or her independence of judgment in performance of University duties, nor shall an employee receive any compensation from any source other than the State of Texas except as allowed by law. All consulting and other paid professional employment shall comply with Board Policy 57.02 and SAM 02.A.08 - Consulting and Paid Professional Service.

In accordance with Board Policy 57.05, any outside employment of the Chancellor, other officers of the System Administration, or the president or vice presidents of any university, including serving on the Board of Directors or governing board of any outside organization, shall be approved in advance by the Board.

- 4.12. Reporting of time; maintenance of all records: It is a violation of law to falsify or alter the reporting of time worked, salary records, or any way revise university documents or records so as to provide an unearned benefit to the employee or another party.

- 4.13. Transfer of research results, materials, products, records: Board Policy 21.08 requires that university faculty and staff disclose on a timely basis the creation or discovery of all potentially patentable inventions created with University resources. Ownership of these inventions must be assigned to the university regardless of source of funding.

Universities must have policies and procedures in place to ensure compliance with all applicable federal guidelines related to funded research, intellectual property, and related conflict of interest regulations.

- 4.14. Travel: Travel undertaken on official System business may be paid or reimbursed from University funds when arrangements comply with applicable SAMs 01.C.05 - Executive Travel, 03.A.03 - Business Travel, and 03.A.04 - University Credit Cards.

- 4.15. Use of university equipment, facilities, support staff, and other resources: As a state employee, under statute, an employee is required to use university property for university

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purposes only, not for personal or private purposes. In situations where there is no direct cost to the university, such as use of telephones to make occasional local calls, such use is not considered a misapplication of state property and may be permitted within reason.

Use of university facilities, space, equipment or support staff for any activity other than the conduct of the employee's job responsibilities is permitted only if an appropriate and equitable financial arrangement has been concluded between the individual and the institution prior to the beginning of the outside activity. Please review SAMs 01.B.06 – Facilities Reservation and Rentals and 03.A.05 – Contract Administration for additional guidance.

- 4.16. Use of System and university names: The name of the University of Houston System or its universities may in no case be used for advertising or procurement purposes by any individual or external organization for non-University purposes. Likewise, employees may not represent themselves as acting in the capacity of System or university employees when conducting consulting or personal activities. The System as well as the universities bear no responsibility for any actual or implied obligations or liabilities incurred by an individual resulting from a consulting or other paid professional agreement or activity.

5. COMPLIANCE

- 5.1. In compliance with Board Policy 57.01, each university is required to provide a copy of the laws and policies comprising the code of ethics to employees annually and to each new employee at the start of their employment. To acknowledge receipt and understanding of these laws and policies, all employees must annually complete Code of Ethics training.

Each university shall establish procedures related to the ethical conduct of employees that shall include the following compliance actions:

- b. Annual certification by regular faculty, exempt staff, and other key staff involved in procurement or funded research activities to include the following:
- receipt of this document and compliance with its provisions,
 - disclosure of any external consulting, employment, and professional activities – including service on governing boards and ownership in outside enterprises - providing the names of the external employers/organizations involved,
 - disclosure of any actual or potential conflicts of interest related to external employment, acceptance of benefits, or external investments, and
 - any additional information that may be required by federal funding agencies.
- b. A procedure for the timely prior review and approval or disapproval of written disclosures of pending relationships by university employees entering into any consulting, investment, professional, or other arrangement that may potentially involve a conflict of interest or commitment. Such procedures shall require approval at the vice

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presidential or vice chancellor level of all such activities and annual reporting to the Chancellor.

5.2. In addition to these System-wide certifications, the Chancellor and presidents are required to submit an annual financial statement with the Texas Ethics Commission using the forms provided by the commission. Vice presidents, those at the director level or higher positions over procurement and contracting functions, and those others considered by them to have high-level procurement responsibilities shall file with the chief financial officer of each component university a report disclosing the following information:

- a. The amount of any compensation received for services related to these associations; and
- b. Known information regarding whether any of the organizations cited have any relationship to the System and a description of the relationship.

5.3. Information received during the annual certification shall be compiled and submitted to the Chancellor through the Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance prior to the Chancellor's annual report to the Board.

6. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible Party: Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance

Review: Every five years

7. APPROVAL

Approved: Raymond Bartlett
Senior Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance
Renu Khator
Chancellor

Date: May 27, 2021

Link: [OFFICIAL \(uhsystem.edu\)](https://uhsystem.edu)

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-VICTORIA

C-8 Employee Standards of Conduct (policy also addresses Conflicts of Interest)
www.uhv.edu/fin/policy/c/c-8.aspx

SECTION: PERSONNEL INDEX C-8

Policy

Employees of the University of Houston-Victoria (UHV) are public servants and have a responsibility to the public in the performance of official duties. Federal and state law, together with growing scrutiny of the complex relationships between public institutions and outside public and private organizations and individuals, necessitate the clarification of standards of accountability for public servants. Requirements for ethical behavior are especially important in public institutions of higher education; university employees are accountable to taxpayers for the use of public funds and also have the responsibility to lead and educate university students by example.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employees are informed of their responsibilities for accountability and ethical conduct and that any potential conflict is reviewed and reported in accordance with state and federal law and University of Houston System Board of Regents Policies. This policy applies to all university employees, with certain reporting requirements for specific groups as noted.

University employees shall promptly disclose to their supervisor any substantiated information regarding what they believe to constitute a violation of this policy or any law or institutional policy.

Failure to comply with the provisions of this policy may subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, as well as to the possibility of criminal action.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employees are informed of their responsibilities for accountability and ethical conduct and that any potential conflict is reviewed and reported in accordance with state and federal law and University of Houston System Board of Regents Policies. This policy applies to all university employees, with certain reporting requirements for specific groups as noted.

University employees shall promptly disclose to their supervisor any substantiated information regarding what they believe to constitute a violation of this policy or any law or institutional policy.

Failure to comply with the provisions of this policy may subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, as well as to the possibility of criminal action.

Definitions

Benefit: Anything reasonably regarded by an independent observer as providing monetary gain or advantage. For the purposes of this policy, a benefit shall include, but is not limited to

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monetary gifts, meals, employment, travel, or items of significant gain or advantage with a value of \$50 or more. When the appropriateness of a benefit is in question, it should not be accepted.

Bribery: A university employee commits the criminal offense of bribery if the employee solicits, offers, or accepts any benefit in exchange for a decision, opinion, recommendation, vote, or other exercise of discretion by the employee.

Conflict of Interest: A situation in which there is a divergence between the employee's private interests and the employee's professional obligations to the university (i.e. the public interest) such that an independent observer might reasonably question whether the employee's actions or decisions are determined by considerations of private gain, financial or otherwise, to the university's detriment.

Conflict of Commitment: A situation in which an employee's outside activities interfere with the employee's primary commitment of time and intellectual energies to the university, or in which a full-time employee's primary professional loyalty is not to UHV. The general permitted limit to external commitments for faculty is one day per calendar week, never to conflict with the employee's scheduled classes or other duties and responsibilities.

Consulting and outside employment: For the purposes of this policy, activities undertaken for remuneration from a third party when the activity is within the scope of activities, functions, or expertise for which the individual is compensated by the university. This definition does not include unpaid public service or lectures for fees, unless these activities require significant amounts of time or otherwise adversely affect the employee's performance of university duties.

Honoraria: A payment for speech, lecture, or other services on which, by custom or agreement, a specific price may not be set. For the purposes of this policy, this definition includes any payment from an outside entity for services such as making a speech, teaching a class or workshop, or providing consulting services.

Immediate family: Includes spouse and dependent children. Children, for the purposes of this document, include adopted, step, and foster children, as well as natural sons and daughters.

Related-party interest: A business or personal relationship that exists between a university employee and an outside individual or organization that may influence the employee's actions or decisions due to considerations of private benefit - financial or otherwise - and/or may create or be perceived as creating a conflict of interest.

Significant financial interest: Anything of monetary value including, but not limited to salary, other payments for services (e.g., consulting fees or honoraria); equity interests (e.g., stocks, stock options, or other ownership interests); and intellectual property rights (e.g., patents, copyrights, and royalties from such rights) that, when aggregated with immediate family:

- exceeds \$10,000 fair market value and 5 percent ownership; or
- is expected to exceed \$10,000 in payments during the next 12-month period

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Standard of Conduct Guidelines

University employees have a responsibility to the public in the performance of their official duties. High institutional and personal standards of conduct must be maintained to fulfill that responsibility. These standards must include avoiding any actions that would create the appearance of violation of laws or ethical principles.

UHV employees shall avoid using their positions for purposes that are, or give the appearance of being motivated by a desire for private gain for themselves or others, such as those with whom they have family, business, or other ties. University employees shall exercise the utmost good faith in all transactions, activities, and behaviors related to their duties to the university and its property and resources. The principles of good faith and honest dealing apply to all aspects of the employee's responsibilities and activities on the part of the university, not just those identified in this policy as subject to particular statutes or causes for particular concern.

- **Disclosure of Confidential Information** - No university employee shall disclose confidential information gained by reason of his or her position, nor shall the employee otherwise use such information for personal gain or benefit. Similarly, no employee shall accept other employment or engage in any business or professional activity that foreseeably might require or induce the employee to disclose confidential information acquired through his or her position.
- **Business, Investments, and Professional Activity** - An employee or the employee's immediate family shall not make personal investments in any enterprise that foreseeably might create a significant conflict between the employee's private interests and the university's interests. An employee shall not transact any business for the university with any entity of which he or she is an owner, officer, agent, employee, or member or in which the employee or the employee's immediate family owns any significant interest or accrues any benefit.
- **Bribery** - No employee shall solicit, offer or accept any benefit in exchange for a decision, opinion, recommendation, vote, or other exercise of discretion.
- **Outside Consulting or Other Employment** - The University expects employees to accord a full professional commitment to the university during the terms of their appointments. Interaction between employees and external entities for reasonable periods of time and for personal remuneration may be desirable when the relationship benefits the university, enhances the professional skills of the employee, or constitutes a public service. However, no employee shall accept consulting or external employment that might impair his or her independence of judgment in performance of university duties, nor shall an employee receive any compensation from any source other than the State of Texas except as allowed by law. The University bears no responsibility for any actual or implied obligations or liabilities incurred by an individual resulting from a consulting or other paid professional agreement or activity. All such activity must be reported to the immediate supervisor for approval before performing the work. The employee must be careful to avoid conflicts of interest and conflicts of commitment. Employees should be aware that a Conflict of Interest situation exists when outside activities interfere with the employee's primary commitment of time and intellectual energies to the university, or when a full-time employee's primary professional loyalty is not to the University. The

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general permitted limit to external commitments for faculty is one day per calendar week, never to conflict with the employee's scheduled classes or other duties and responsibilities. Unpaid public service or lectures for fees are not included unless these activities require significant amounts of time or otherwise adversely affect the employee's performance of university duties. All consulting and other paid professional employment shall comply with Board of Regents Policy 57.02 and UHS SAM 02.A.08.

Prior to entering into any consulting, investment, professional, or other arrangement that may involve a conflict of interest or commitment, a faculty or exempt employee must submit to the appropriate supervisor a complete written disclosure of the pending relationship and any potential conflicts that it may involve. The subsequent arrangements will then be subject to the approval of the appropriate Cabinet-level supervisor. When a question of propriety of the proposed employment or business relationship exists, the supervisor shall submit the application to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost (for faculty) or Vice President for Administration (for staff). These procedures apply to all regular faculty and exempt staff and to non-exempt staff with procurement or research responsibilities.

In accordance with Board of Regents Policy 57.05, any outside employment of the Chancellor, other officers of the System Administration, or the President or vice presidents of any component, including serving on the board of directors or governing board of any outside organization, shall be approved in advance by the Board of Regents.

- **Honoraria** - By state law, a university employee may not solicit, agree to accept, or accept an honorarium in consideration for services the employee would not have been asked to provide but for his or her official position; i.e. for providing services on behalf of the university. This prohibition includes a payment made to a third party if made in exchange of the employee's services. This restriction applies to any fee for any service provided in the employee's official capacity, but does not apply to food, transportation, and lodging in connection with the service provided.
- **Dual Employment** - A UHV employee may hold another non-elective state or federal office or position of honor, trust, or profit only with the prior approval of the President and the Board of Regents. Such approval must be based on formal findings that the dual office holding is of benefit to the state or is required by state or federal law and that the situation creates no conflict of interest or commitment. UHV is required to maintain records of any compensation, including per diem, associated with the second position.
- **Charitable or Professional Organizations/Pro Bono Work** - Any contribution of time without compensation to charitable or professional organizations or causes that may infringe upon the employee's regular work hours must be disclosed to the employee's supervisor and must not interfere with the individual's university responsibilities.
- **Use of University Equipment, Facilities, Support Staff, and Other Resources** - As a state employee, an employee is required to use university property for university purposes only, not for personal or private purposes. In situations where there is no direct cost to the university, such as use of university telephones to make non-toll calls, or use of computers for occasional internet use, such use is not considered a misapplication of state property and may be permitted within reason. Use of university equipment, facilities, or support staff for any activity other than the conduct of the employee's job

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responsibilities is permitted only if prior appropriate and equitable financial arrangements have been concluded between the individual and the University.

- **Use of University Name** - The name of the University of Houston-Victoria may in no case be used for advertising or procurement purposes by any individual or external organization for non-university purposes. Likewise, employees may not represent themselves as acting in the capacity of university employees when conducting consulting or personal activities. UHV bears no responsibility for any actual or implied obligations or liabilities incurred by an individual resulting from a consulting or other paid professional agreement or activity.
- **Governmental Appearances or Expert Witness Service** - University employees appearing before Congress or the Texas Legislature or their agencies, committees, or members to offer testimony, opinions, or commentary in regard to existing or potential laws, rules, or regulations, unless expressly authorized to do so by the Board or the Chancellor, must clearly state in advance that they are appearing in their individual capacities and that their testimony, opinions, and commentary are not authorized by and must not be construed as reflecting upon UHV's position.
- **Nepotism** - Relatives of university employees may not be employed in positions where the employee has the official authority to hire or recommend or approve the hiring, salary, or promotion of the relative, even if it results from marriage after the employment relationship was formed. The requirements of nepotism statutes may be found in Board of Regents Policy 57.07 and UHS SAM 02.A.21.
- **Transfer of Research Results, Materials, Products, Records** - Board of Regents Policy 21.08 requires that university faculty and staff disclose on a timely basis the creation or discovery of all potentially patentable inventions created or discovered in the course of their university activities or with use of university resources. Ownership of these inventions must be assigned to the university regardless of source of funding.
- **Travel** - Travel undertaken on official university business may be paid or reimbursed from university funds when arrangements comply with applicable University of Houston System SAMs 01.C.05, 03.A.03, 03.A.04, and 03.A.14.
- **Lobbying by State Employees, Political Campaigns, Holding Public Office, and Other Political activities** - The General Appropriations Act prohibits the use of state funds to influence the outcome of any election or any legislative measure. Likewise, this act restricts the use of any university funds to hire lobbyists and provides restrictions against offering gifts to legislators and accepting gifts from legislators. Similarly, federal restrictions prohibit the use of federal funds to influence federal legislation. The Vice Chancellor for Governmental Relations shall be responsible for the general coordination of University of Houston System governmental activities.
- **Political Campaigns** - No university employee may use his or her authority, influence, or time during university work hours to affect the result of any election or political campaign or to achieve any other political purpose. Likewise, university funds, equipment, or other resources may not be used to work on a political campaign. University employees may run for local elective office and serve as elected public officials so long as campaign activities are not conducted during official university hours and so long as the office does not involve a political party primary or a party affiliation. The employee must provide prior notification to his or her supervisor of the candidacy and election to office.

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- **Reporting of Time and Effort; Maintenance of All Records** - It is a violation of law to falsify or alter the reporting of time worked, salary records, or any way revise university documents or records so as to provide an unearned benefit to the employee or another party.
- **Acceptance of gifts or other benefits** - A benefit is anything reasonably regarded by an independent observer as providing monetary gain or advantage. Benefits include, but are not limited to monetary gifts, meals, employment, travel, or items of significant gain or advantage with a value of \$50 or more. When the appropriateness of a benefit is in question, it should not be accepted. An employee (or member of the employee's immediate family) may not solicit or accept any gift, favor, privilege, benefit, service, exemption, or thing of value that might influence the employee to perform his or her job differently. An employee should assume that anyone having business with the university as a client, contractor, or vendor is likely to be seen as attempting to curry favor if that person provides any gift or benefit to the employee.

The only gifts and benefits not subject to this restriction are those conferred on account of kinship or a personal or professional relationship independent of employee's status, non-cash items of less than \$50.00 in value, and those used solely to defray expenses accrued in the performance of official duties that are not reimbursable by the university.

- **Related Party Interests** - A related party interest is a business or personal relationship that exists between a university employee and an outside individual or organization that may influence the employee's actions or decisions due to considerations of private benefit - financial or otherwise - and/or may create or be perceived as creating a conflict of interest. There is a distinction between a related-party interest and a conflict of interest. A related-party interest is a question of fact and results when an individual is in a position to personally benefit from transactions entered into by the University.

However, whether the transaction or relationship creates a conflict of interest requires a subjective evaluation of the facts and circumstances. All faculty and staff in a position to originate purchase requests or influence purchasing decisions must annually complete a disclosure statement.

- **Conflicts of Interest** - No employee shall use their employment to obtain unauthorized privileges, benefits, or things of value for oneself or others. Employees are required to take the initiative to disclose and request prior approval of their supervisor before entering into any activity or situation that may involve, or appear to involve, a conflict of interest or other potentially incompatible obligation. Such a relationship includes consulting or other outside employment, a relationship defined as a related-party interest, or any other relationship that results in a gift or other benefit to the employee.

Although the University of Houston System depends upon the integrity and discretion of its staff with respect to actual or apparent conflict of interest, all University of Houston System employees are subject to the prohibitions of state law and applicable federal guidelines. Guidelines to avoid conflict of interest include the following:

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- No employee shall solicit, accept, or agree to accept any privilege, benefit or thing of value for the exercise of his or her discretion, influence or powers as an employee except as allowed by law.
- No employee shall accept any privilege, benefit or thing of value that might influence him or her in the discharge of his duties as an employee.
- No employee shall use his or her position to secure special privileges or exemptions for himself or herself or others, except as is allowed by law.
- Any employee who is an officer, agent, employee or member of, or owns a significant interest in any entity doing business with any component of the University of Houston System must disclose such relationship in writing to his or her immediate superior.
- No employee shall accept employment or engage in any business or professional activity which foreseeably might require or induce him or her to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of his/her university position.
- No employee shall disclose confidential information gained by reason of his or her university position nor shall he or she otherwise use such information for his or her personal gain or benefit.
- No employee shall transact any business for the university with any entity of which he or she is an officer, agent, employee, or member, or in which he or she owns a significant interest.
- No employee shall make personal investments in any enterprise which foreseeably might create a substantial conflict between his or her private interests and the university's interests.
- No employee shall accept other employment which might impair his or her independence or judgment in the performance of his or her university duties.
- No employee shall receive any compensation for his or her services from any source other than the State of Texas except as allowed by law.
- No employee who exercises discretion in connection with contracts, purchases, payments, claims or other pecuniary transactions shall solicit, accept or agree to accept any benefit from a person or entity the employee knows, or should know, is or is likely to become financially interested in such transactions.

University employees are required and expected to take the initiative to disclose and request prior approval of their supervisor before entering into any activity or situation that may involve, or appear to involve, a conflict of interest or other potentially incompatible obligation. Such a relationship includes consulting or other outside employment, a relationship defined as a related-party interest, or any other relationship that results in a gift or other benefits to the employee.

Evaluating and Resolving Violations of Standards

University employees are asked to report in good faith violations of this policy or any law, regulation or other occurrence of institutional noncompliance, whenever observed or suspected. Reports may be made to either the employee's immediate supervisor, the HR/AA Director, the campus assigned Institutional Compliance Officer (Director of Business Services) or confidentially to the telephone number provided on the University's Institutional Compliance website. Violations involving sponsored project agreements should be directed to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and handled in accordance with applicable policy.

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Confidentiality of the information and employee(s) involved is of utmost importance to insure proper adjudication of the allegations. Federal and state laws prohibit university officials from retaliating against employees who report violations in good faith. In addition, the university is committed to maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of all individuals who make such reports to the extent allowed by law.

All reports received will be reviewed immediately to determine whether an investigation is warranted. Every attempt will be made to resolve internal violations at the lowest level of administrative review. However, after a determination of the seriousness of the violation has been made, other administrators may also become involved. When criminal activity is suspect, appropriate civil authorities may become involved. When the investigation involves the Internal Auditing Department, the Office of General Counsel, or the UHS Institutional Compliance Officer, the appropriate campus Vice President will be notified as well as the Director, Human Resources/Affirmative Action.

Based upon the findings, appropriate action will be taken to remedy the situation.

Supervisors may contact the Director, Human Resources/Affirmative Action or the campus Institutional Compliance Officer (Director of Business Services) at any time for guidance and assistance in resolving standards of conduct violations. Also, employees may call the State of Texas Ethics Commission (512) 463-5800 for guidance.

Sanctions for Violations of Employee Standards of Conduct

Standard of Conduct violations, depending upon the severity, may subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, as well as to the possibility of criminal charges and prosecution.

Summary of Disclosure and Reporting Requirements

1. In accordance with Board of Regents Policy 57.01.3, copies of the laws and Board of Regents Policies listed below are to be distributed to an employee by the Human Resources Office upon initial employment and annually by the University of Houston System Board of Regents' office.
 - Statutory Standards of Conduct for State Employees, 572.051, Texas Government Code
 - General Appropriations Act Article IX, 5. Political Aid, Legislative Influence
 - Board of Regents Policy: Section III Academic and Student Success

Ø Academic Freedom (21.03)

Ø Sexual Harassment (29.02)

- Board of Regents Policy: Section VI - Administration and Finance

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Ø Consulting and Paid Professional Service (57.02)

Ø Dual Employment (57.04)

Ø Nepotism (57.07)

Ø Conflicts of Interest (57.08)

- Board of Regents Policy: Section VIII External Affairs

Ø Governmental Appearances (81.01)

1. UHS Policy Distribution - In accordance with UHS Administrative Memorandum 02.A.29, Ethical Conduct of Employees, copies of this policy are to be distributed to all university employees annually. The annual distribution may be by e-mail.
2. UHV Policy Distribution - Copies of university policy C-8, Employee Standards of Conduct, are to be distributed upon initial employment and then electronically, annually to all employees.
3. Faculty Consulting or Outside Paid Professional Activity Disclosure - In accordance with Board of Regent policy 57.02.5, Faculty who wish to arrange consulting or other paid professional activities must provide prior written notification and receive written approval from their dean. Review by their dean of such activities will include consideration of any real or apparent conflict of interest and the benefit of the proposed service to the system and the component university.
4. Exempt Staff Consulting or Paid Professional Activity Personal Disclosure - In accordance with Board of Regent policy 57.02.6, professional or administrative staff who wish to arrange consulting or other paid professional activities must obtain prior written approval from the appropriate supervisor. While consulting is a recognized aspect of faculty activities with the limitations noted in this document, consulting by professional or administrative staff must be justified on an individual basis by clear and direct benefit to the system.
5. Institutional Reporting of Outside Consulting, Employment or Expert Witness Services - Annually, during the first quarter, faculty and exempt professional staff will be surveyed by the Provost's Office for any consulting, outside employment, or expert witness activities. The information will be forwarded to the appropriate state office with an information copy to the UHS General Counsel's office.
6. University employees are asked to report violations of this policy or any law, regulation or other occurrence of institutional noncompliance, whenever observed, to one of the following: the employee's immediate supervisor, the HR/AA Director, the Institutional Compliance Officer or anonymously to the telephone number provided on the University's Institutional Compliance website.
7. Employee Disclosure and Annual Reporting of Related Party Interests- Annually, within the first quarter, the Department of Business Services will obtain signed disclosure statements from all faculty and staff in a position to originate purchase requests or influence purchasing decisions of any possible conflict of interest situations. Information is reported in accordance with UHS Administrative Memorandum 02.A.29. Disclosures are required from any employee who
 - has previously disclosed a related party interest, or

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- will serve in a supervisory capacity at a department level or higher in the coming fiscal year, or
 - is in a position to make final purchasing decisions. (this category includes all delegated departmental purchasers and P-Card users), or
 - has signature authority on any university cost center, or
 - can personally benefit from a relationship or business transaction.
8. Financial Statement Report - In accordance with UHS Administrative Memorandum, 02.A.29, Section 5.2, the President is required to submit an annual financial statement with the Texas Ethics Commission using forms prescribed by the Commission.
9. Procurement Disclosure Report- In accordance with UHS Administrative Memorandum 02.A.29, Section 5.2, certain employees, including vice presidents, employees at the director level or higher, employees who are over procurement and contracting functions, and those others considered by the campus to have high-level procurement responsibilities shall file with the chief financial officer of each component a report disclosing the following information:
- The amount of any compensation received for services related to these associations; and
 - Known information regarding whether any of the organizations cited have any relationship to the University of Houston System and a description of the relationship.

Questions/Comments

Any questions and/or comments regarding this policy should be directed to the Business Services Department.

References

1. Board of Regents Policy 57.01, Code of Ethics, Section VI - Administration and Finance (<http://www.uhsa.uh.edu/board-of-regents/policies/index.php#BOR Policies Section VI>)
2. UH System Administrative Memo 02.A.29, Ethical Conduct of Employees (<http://www.uh.edu/policyservices/sam/2HumanResources/2A29.pdf>)
3. Texas Ethics Commission's [Guide to Ethics Laws for State Employees](#)
4. University Policy C-6, Nepotism (<http://www.uhv.edu/fin/policy/c/c-6.aspx>)
5. Texas Government Code, Section 572.051, Standards of Conduct (<http://www.ethics.state.tx.us/statutes/07ch572.htm#572.051>)

Approved By:

Signature Obtained 04/23/2019
Robert K. Glenn, Ph.D.
President

Next Review Date: 04/23/2024
Originator: Business Services

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Financial Aid Conflict of Interest Certification

Can be found on UHV Compliance Website under Standards of Conduct at
www.uhv.edu/compliance/pdf/FY2009/Financial_Aid_Conflict_of_Interest.pdf

Financial Aid Employee Standards of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Certification

Instructions: *All Financial Aid (FA) employees are to complete this certification, which supplements University Policy C-8, Employee Standards of Conduct, annually by August 31st. New FA employees are to complete within 30 days of employment.*

Distribution: *Original to employee's personnel file. Copy to employee. Copy to Financial Aid Director.*

As a University of Houston-Victoria (UHV) financial aid employee, I am expected to always maintain exemplary standards of professional conduct in all aspects of carrying out my responsibilities, specifically including all dealings with any entities involved in any manner in student financial aid, regardless of whether such entities are involved in a government sponsored, subsidized, or regulated activity. In doing so, I understand I will:

1. Refrain from taking any action for personal benefit.
2. Refrain from taking any action I believe is contrary to law, regulation, or the best interests of the students and parents I serve.
3. Ensure that the information I provide is accurate, unbiased, and does not reflect any preference arising from actual or potential personal gain.
4. Be objective in making decisions and advising the Financial Aid Director regarding relationships with any entity involved in any aspect of student financial aid.
5. Refrain from soliciting or accepting anything of other than nominal value, (retail value of not more than \$10) from any entity, other than an institution of higher education or a governmental entity such as the U.S. Dept. of Education, involved in the making, holding, consolidating or processing of any student loans, including anything of value (including reimbursement of expenses) for serving on an advisory body or as part of a training activity of or sponsored by any such entity.
6. Avoid all actual or perceived conflicts of interest, promptly disclosing to the university, in such manner as UHV prescribes, any involvement with or interest in any entity, including any family members attending UHV, UHSCR, or UHSSL involved in any aspect of student financial aid.

I further understand that:

1. I cannot award and disburse the same transaction.
2. I cannot participate in the selection, award, or administration of any scholarship, grant or loan award supported or funded by Federal, State or University funds if a real or apparent conflict of interest exists. I understand that a conflict of interest arises when I, my

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immediate family, partner, or other organization which employs or is about to employ any of these parties, has a financial or other interest in my decision.

3. I cannot manipulate the dates of award of any scholarship, grant or loan that may be perceived as favorable to myself or any family member.

Acknowledgement and Certification:

I understand my responsibilities as stated above and that I have a responsibility to promptly report any real or apparent conflict of interest, violations of laws or regulations, fraud, theft or other irregularities to the Director of Financial Aid.

To my knowledge, there are no actual or potential conflicts of interest where an independent observer might reasonably question my actions or decisions were determined or motivated by considerations of personal gain. I further understand that I may be subject to civil fines and disciplinary action up to and including termination and/or prosecution in the event of intentional fraud or other serious violation of these standards.

Employee Signature

Date

Financial Aid Director Signature

Printed Name

Notes:

1. Family is defined as the employee's spouse, the employee's or the spouse's natural and adopted children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren; parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents; brothers, sisters, half-brothers, and half-sisters; aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, first cousins, and second cousins; and persons married to them

E-7 Related Party

www.uhv.edu/fin/policy/e/e-7.aspx

SECTION: PURCHASING INDEX: E-7

SUBJECT: RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

Policy

Employees of the University of Houston-Victoria shall avoid using their positions for purposes that are, or give the appearance of being, motivated by a desire for private gain for themselves or others, such as those with whom they have family, business, or other ties. University employees

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shall exercise the utmost good faith in all transactions, activities, and behaviors related to their duties to the UH System, its property, and resources. Faculty, administrators and staff in a position to personally benefit from a transaction entered into by the University of Houston-Victoria or other UHS components shall annually complete a disclosure statement regarding related party interests as required by UHS Administrative Memorandum 03.A.17. (References)

Prior to an employee or any member of the employee's family entering into any related party relationship or accepting any benefit, the employee must submit a detailed written disclosure of the proposed relationship for review and a final determination.

Definition

Conflict of Interest: A situation in which there is a divergence between the employee's private interests and professional obligations to the University, such that an independent observer might reasonably question whether the employee's actions or decisions are determined by considerations of private gain, whether financial or otherwise, to the University's detriment. Such a situation may result from consulting or other outside employment, a relationship defined as a related-party interest, or any other relationship that results in a gift or benefit to the employee.

Related Party Interest: A business or personal relationship that exists between an employee and an outside individual or organization that may influence the employee's actions or decisions due to considerations of private benefit – financial or otherwise – and/or may create or be perceived as creating a conflict of interest.

Procedure

The Related Party Disclosure will be completed annually online as part of a reporting process initiated by the UH System. Related Party Disclosures are to be completed by all full-time faculty, all exempt staff and non-exempt employees in a position to originate purchase requests or influence a purchasing decision. Examples include using a procurement card to make a purchase, creating or approving purchase requisitions or vouchers, selecting a vendor or contractor or negotiating or signing a contract.

Texas Government Code 2261.252 requires employees to provide disclosure of potential conflicts of interests. (References) To avoid timing problems associated with the annual reporting, prior to an employee or any member of the employee's family entering into any related party relationship or accepting any benefit, the employee must submit to his or her department head a detailed written disclosure of the proposed relationship. The written disclosure shall include:

- The name and relationships of the individual entering into the relationship or activity;
- The nature of the pending activity or relationship;
- The relationship between the outside entity and the university;
- Any benefits to be gained by the employee or family member; and
- A description of how the employee will ensure separation of interests between the commitment to the outside party and to the university.

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The employee's department head shall review the information provided and request any additional information which may be considered relevant. Indicating whether he/she believes that a conflict of interest may be present, the department head shall forward the written disclosure through appropriate channels to the Executive Committee for final determination of the proposed activity.

Should a situation be identified in which an employee is involved in any business or professional activity or relationship and/or has accepted any benefit that creates a conflict of interest or commitment with the employee's responsibilities to the university, the Chancellor will be informed and the UHS Department of Internal Auditing may be contacted to investigate. Depending upon the results of the investigation, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal and possibly criminal charges.

Deans and department heads should at least annually discuss related party interests and potential conflict of interest with their employees.

References

1. UHS Administrative Memorandum, 03.A.17 Disclosure of Related Party Interests
2. Texas Government Code 2261.252, Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interests

Approved:

Signature Obtained

Raymond V. Morgan, Jr., Ph. D.
President

Date
12/14/17

Originating Department: Finance Department

Next Review Date: December 2022



Phillip W. Hurd
Chief Audit Executive
November 15, 2021