

**Conflict of Interest Guidelines
for Committee Participation
July 25, 2007 (amended 02/20/12)**

At the first meeting of any committee, the chair should discuss the issue of conflict of interest with members of the committee. The following statement summarizes conflict of interest for committee members:

Faculty members participating in hiring or review committees must exercise integrity and objectivity when making decisions. Committee members must be certain that conflicts of interest or other biases do not exist which may interfere with their ability to make an impartial decision. A conflict of interest or bias occurs when a committee member has a financial or personal relationship or interest which impairs the member's ability to be fair and impartial. For example, a conflict of interest may well exist where a committee member will receive an individual financial benefit from a decision or where a committee member has a familiar or similar relationship with an individual who may be affected by a decision.

A person serving on a committee may conclude that he or she has an actual (or perceived) conflict of interest or bias and may remove him or herself from involvement in a particular decision to be made by the committee. A committee member who is not certain whether a conflict of interest or bias exists may bring his or her concern about the conflict or bias to the attention of the appropriate dean, committee chair, or supervisor; in this event, the committee member must disclose enough information to enable the dean, committee chair, or supervisor to consider the matter fairly and openly. If the dean, committee chair, or supervisor determines either that a conflict of interest or other bias (or the appearance of a conflict of interest or other bias) may exist, the committee member shall be excused from participating in making that decision.

A member of the committee or an individual who is the subject of a decision to be made by the committee may also raise a question as to whether a committee member has a conflict of interest or bias which may interfere with that committee member's impartiality. The concerned individual shall bring the matter to the attention of the appropriate dean, committee chair, or supervisor. The dean, committee chair, or supervisor shall discuss the matter with the affected committee member; if the dean, committee chair, or supervisor determines that a conflict of interest or other bias (or the appearance of a conflict of interest or other bias) may exist, the member of the committee shall be excused from participating in making the decision at issue.

A member of a committee who is excused from participating in making a decision in accordance with this policy does not forfeit his or her position as a member of the committee. The fact that an individual has been excused from participation pursuant to this policy shall not prejudice any personnel or other institutional decision made with respect to the committee member.

Although these guidelines have been created to be instructional for committees, the basic principles also apply to department chairs, division heads and others participating in hiring and review decisions and other departmental and College matters. This may include long-range planning within a department, discussions about specific curricular directions, how to assign overloads, etc.