



HOPE COLLEGE

Conflict of Interest Policy (COI)

Version 2, December 18, 2008

POLICY STATEMENT:

Federal regulations governing NIH and NSF grants require (See regulations at 42 CFR 50.601 and following) that the College adopt, monitor, and enforce a Conflict of Interest Policy covering financial conflicts, which may arise as a result of research funded by the NSF or NIH or other government agencies, including NEH, DHS and all others. Full-time faculty and staff of Hope College who propose to receive funds from a federal agency or foundation for research or materials development projects must indicate, in the process of approval, whether any conditions exist which might create an actual or apparent conflict of interest.

A possible conflict of interest may not preclude acceptance of the grant or contract in question; but appropriate disclosures or other safeguards may need to be implemented and accepted by both the Investigator and the institution. Information received on possible financial interests in a proposed project will be kept strictly confidential, except where public disclosure is a safeguard the Investigator and College have agreed upon or such disclosure is required by law or court order.

Each employee (“Investigator”) who proposes to receive external federal grants, contracts, or comparable awards must indicate s/he understands the COI policy by indicating so on the “External Support Routing Form” by checking the COI box and by signing the form. In checking off the box on COI, the investigator must answer the two following questions.

1. Does the Investigator, his or her colleagues, family, or associates have a significant financial interest or other conflict that would reasonably appear to be affected by the conduct or outcome of the grant-funded activities?
2. Will the significant financial interest, or other conflict, if it exists, potentially affect the integrity of the project, i.e. how the project is run or what kinds of results are reported?

If the answer to either question is “YES” or “POSSIBLY”, the investigator must disclose to the Provost and the Dean of her/his respective division all significant financial interests or other conflicts of the Investigator (including those of the Investigator's spouse and dependent children) (i) that would reasonably appear to be affected by the research or educational activities funded or proposed for funding by the grant source; or (ii) in entities whose financial interests would reasonably appear to be affected by such activities.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY:

If a potential effect or the appearance of an effect on the project is present, what steps will the Investigator and the College take to assure its integrity?

What Procedure Will Be Followed?

Upon receiving the confidential disclosure from the investigator(s), the Provost or his/her appointee will assemble an administrative panel to review the disclosure and the potential of a COI. The panel will be composed of representatives from the Provost's Office, the Dean's Office of the appropriate academic division, the Sponsored Research Office, and the College's Legal Counsel. Appropriate senior faculty members may also be impaneled if their expertise is required. If a potential conflict is present, management steps will be proposed, discussed with the Investigator, and then stipulated as conditions for expenditure of the award.

The above policy refers only to externally sponsored research, materials development, training, and other types of program delivery in which funds are awarded to or handled by the College. External funding awarded directly to an Investigator rather than through the College must be reported to the Provost as outside employment.

The College reserves the right to require faculty or other employees to follow the procedure described above if the outside employment project substantively involves use of other College personnel or College resources other than use of the Investigator's office space, office computer, and comparable standard resources provided to individual faculty members.

What Are the Ways of "Managing" Possible Conflict of Interest?

After review determines that a conflict exists, the College, following discussion with the Investigator, may require that any of a wide range of steps be taken. These may range from disclosure to the funding agency, to disclosure in public announcements, to special monitoring arrangements, to divestment of the conflicting interest.

The College's purpose in management of conflict of interest will be to protect the following: its own fiscal interests and reputation; the intellectual integrity of scholarly work associated with the College; and the professional growth of faculty and staff. Steps taken to manage a conflict of interest need not be undertaken until notice of award is received, but must precede expenditure of funds.

DEFINITIONS:

What Is Significant Financial Interest?

It is the ownership of 5% or more of a company or business that will potentially benefit from the work; ownership of \$10,000 or more in stock, patents, or other assets that are likely to be affected by work or its results; or an income of \$10,000 or more within one year to be reasonably projected through salary, royalties, or other fees. The salary that is to be drawn from the grant, contract, or fellowship itself, or from the College as recipient of funds, is exempted; so are lecture fees and consultant fees that may be drawn from non-profit entities as a result of the grant. (Ownership of over \$10,000 equity representing less than 5% ownership of a listed stock company whose business might be affected by the grant outcomes need not be reported as a potential conflict.)

What are Other Conflicts?

Situations where the Investigator's commitment to the project may be materially limited or influenced by other factors, opportunities, projects, or commitments of the Investigator, for example, a competing research project.