



Manual of Policy and Procedures

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POLICY STATEMENT:

To ensure continued confidence of Vermonters in the Vermont State Colleges (hereinafter “VSC”) and its personnel, individuals serving the VSC shall at all times act in a manner consistent with their public responsibilities and shall exercise particular care that no real or perceived detriment to the VSC results from conflicts between personal interests and those of the VSC.

It is the policy of the VSC that its officers, faculty, staff and others acting on its behalf have the obligation to avoid ethical, legal, financial or other conflicts of interest and to ensure that their activities and interests do not conflict with their obligation to the VSC or to its welfare.

This policy applies to all VSC employees not otherwise covered by VSC Policy 207: *Trustee and Executive Conflict of Interest Policy*. The policy also applies to persons affiliated or associated with the VSC, including members of advisory boards to the VSC.

This policy is to be interpreted and applied in a manner that will best serve the interests of the VSC and that distinguishes between those minor and inconsequential conflicts which are unavoidable and those conflicts which are substantial and material. A conflict of interest may exist when an employee, a close relative, or a person or organization with whom the employee is associated has an existing or potential financial or other interest which involves the employee's VSC responsibilities.

The policy does not prohibit an employee from freely pursuing those teaching, research, and professional and public service activities which will not result in such a conflict, nor prohibit an employee from accepting pay, compensation, fees, honoraria, or reimbursement of expenses which may be offered in connection with such activities.

Any activity or expense related to federal grants or contracts must comply with 2 CFR 200 – *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal*

Awards, in addition to the provisions above.

PROCEDURES:

Disclosure and Consultation: The following procedures apply except in situations where a procedure is otherwise provided by a collective bargaining agreement. Each President and, for employees not employed directly by one of the five member institutions, the Chancellor, shall develop a procedure for disclosure and consultation within the following parameters:

1. If an employee believes that he or she may have a conflict of interest, the employee shall promptly and fully disclose the conflict to the appropriate administrator (the Chancellor, the President, or their designee) and shall refrain from participating in any way in the matter to which the conflict relates until the conflict in question has been resolved.
2. When it appears that a material conflict may arise between the personal interest of an employee and his or her responsibilities to the VSC, the employee shall notify the appropriate administrator by submitting a written statement describing the nature of the possible conflict. If an apparent conflict comes to the attention of the administrator, that individual may request a written statement from the employee.
3. If an employee is in doubt as to whether he or she is confronted with a potential conflict of interest, the employee shall consult with the appropriate administrator to determine if the outside interests could conflict impermissibly with employee's obligations to the VSC.
4. The appropriate administrator promptly shall notify the employee in writing that (a) there is no conflict and the employee may proceed; or (b) there may be a conflict and further consultation is necessary prior to reaching a determination; (c) there is a conflict and the employee shall not proceed with his or her personal interest which results in the conflict; or (d) there is a conflict but either the conflict is insubstantial or cured by the disclosure or it is determined that after full disclosure the VSC's interests are best served by participation of the employee despite the conflict or appearance of conflict.
5. The employee may appeal the administrator's decision to the President (Chancellor for Chancellor's Office employees or employees of programs not affiliated with a member institution).
6. The employee must report any significant changes in an outside interest that occur during the year and consult with the appropriate administrator if the undertaking of a new outside interest is considered, to the extent such significant change or undertaking would create an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

7. Any VSC employee who is aware of an unreported conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict on the part of another VSC employee, without fear of reprisal, shall report that information to an appropriate administrator.
8. Any significant violations of this policy shall be reported to the Chancellor or President.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. VSC employees shall make no unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the VSC.
2. VSC employees shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private or public organization or individual.
3. VSC employees shall endeavor to avoid any actions that would create the appearance of conflict of interest.
4. Nothing herein shall be construed to be inconsistent with the provisions of any collective bargaining agreement unless such contrary interpretation is required by law.

CHANCELLOR'S ILLUSTRATIVE GUIDANCE

The Chancellor shall develop, maintain and, from time to time, amend as needed procedures and illustrative guidance in order to implement this policy in a fair and consistent manner.

Employees and others may use the whistleblower hotline to report anonymously allegations of conflict of interest, as well as fraud, illegal or improper activities.

SANCTIONS

Reports of violations of this Policy shall be carefully examined with due regard for the academic freedom and rights of the employee and the interests of the VSC. Charges of violations of this Policy will be processed through the normal channels under the VSC Personnel Handbook or applicable collective bargaining agreement, and sanctions may range from reprimand up to and including dismissal.

Cross References

- VSC Policy 207: *Trustee and Executive Conflict of Interest Policy*
- VSC Policy 211: *Whistleblower Policy for Reporting Fraudulent, Illegal or Improper Activities*

Signed by:

Jeb Spaulding, Chancellor