Real, Potential or Apparent Conflicts of Interest

Definition of Conflict of Interest

As employees of USP, faculty members are expected to work within the best interests of the institution. From time to time situations will arise in which the interests of one or more faculty members may conflict with, potentially conflict with, or appear to conflict with, the best interests of the institution. While conflicting monetary interests are often involved, conflict of interest is not limited to such situations. When a conflict of interest, a potential conflict of interest, or a perceived conflict on interest arises, appropriate steps must be taken to resolve the conflict of interest. The following sections discuss some potential conflict of interest situations. Since not every scenario can be anticipated, faculty members and administrators are responsible for identifying and resolving such situations when they arise.

Conflict of Interest in Outside Activities

A conflict of interest occurs when a faculty member is engaged in paid or unpaid outside activities that are so extensive as to interfere with her/his primary responsibility to USP.

A real, potential, or apparent conflict of interest may occur when a faculty member teaches at another institution in a program that significantly and directly competes with any USP program. Occasional guest lectures in competing programs are not regarded as conflict of interest, but major responsibility for course work represents conflict of interest.

A real, potential, or apparent conflict of interest may occur when a faculty member serves as a consultant for, or a participant in, enterprises or activities that are in competition with USP enterprises or activities.

If any of the above situations occurs or is suspected, the department chair will consult with the faculty member to determine if a potential or actual conflict of interest exists. No further action is required if the department chair determines after consultation that no potential or actual conflict exists. The department chair will keep a record of the inquiry and her/his findings in the faculty member’s file to confirm that the activity has been reviewed and found not to be a conflict of interest. If a potential or actual conflict is found to exist, the department chair and faculty member will devise a plan to manage that conflict. The college dean must approve this plan. If the conflict cannot be managed, the chair will not approve this activity.

Conflict of Interest in Research Activities

University of the Sciences in Philadelphia recognizes that careful attention must be paid to institutional standards and procedures that protect the integrity of the institution and the research conducted there. Therefore, the University and all of its employees are committed to the highest standards of integrity and ethics in their activities.
As support for government and industry-sponsored research is available, the University recognizes that potential conflicts of interest will occur in the normal conduct of research activities. Therefore, any potential conflicts must be disclosed and reviewed by the University, such that the University can make an informed judgment about these activities and require the appropriate actions. The complete Conflict of Interest in Research policy is included in appendix 4 of the FSI.