

## **Wisconsin Partnership Program Partnership Education and Research Committee (PERC) Conflict of Interest Policy**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Partnership Education and Research Committee (PERC) is entrusted with an endowment held as a public trust. Therefore, ethical stewardship of the Wisconsin Partnership Program (WPP) funds distributed by the committee requires the adoption of a conflict of interest policy to identify and manage actual or apparent conflicts of interest. Moreover, the public expects the faculty and staff of the University of Wisconsin to abide by ethical standards that promote the public good. The PERC bears the ultimate responsibility for setting ethical standards and ensuring that those standards permeate the committee and inform its practices. Such standards are intended to identify and evaluate any conflict of interest, real or apparent, that could affect PERC, the UW School of Medicine and Public Health, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

This policy pertains to the Executive Committee and all subcommittees and taskforces authorized by PERC.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Financial Interest:** In accordance with UW System Code of Ethics and Outside Activities Report, financial interest includes: **Compensation** for outside activities in field of academic or professional interest which exceeds \$5,000 per entity in the past 12 months; **leadership positions** in any business or other organization related to academic or professional interest; and/or **ownership interests** in stock, stock options, or another ownership interest in a business or other organization related to field of academic or professional interest that, in the aggregate, exceeds five percent of the total equity in the business or organization or is valued at more than \$20,000.

**Personal (Family) Relationship:** A personal (family) relationship exists with a spouse, partner, parent, sibling, or child of the individual. A personal (family) relationship also exists with other relatives or extended family residing in the individual's household.

**Professional Relationship:** A professional relationship exists if there is a direct reporting relationship between the PERC member and the applicant (e.g., department chair – faculty member\*, section head – faculty member, or advisor – advisee), a mentor relationship (e.g., senior faculty who is assigned responsibility for guidance and annual evaluation of probationary faculty), or if the PERC member is an investigator or key personnel on the application being reviewed.

A professional relationship also exists when a PERC member serves (with or without compensation) as a member of or consultant to a Board of Directors of a not-for-profit organization or other professional association.

\*A department chair – faculty member relationship does not constitute a direct reporting relationship between the PERC member and the applicant if the applicant reports to a section head (or its equivalent) in the department.

### **POLICY**

It is the duty of the PERC members to exercise their responsibilities solely in the interest of the WPP and the PERC. The members shall not exercise their responsibilities in their own interests or in the interests of any person, constituency, or entity that may result in a conflict of interest. To ensure open and frank discussion and honest and fair dealing among the members and to protect the integrity of the

committee, members are not eligible to apply as Principal Investigators, Co-Principal Investigators or Collaborators for PERC funding for the Collaborative Health Sciences Program, New Investigator Program or Opportunity Grants Program during their respective membership terms. However, PERC members may be unpaid consultants. With approval of the PERC, members may be considered to serve as Principal Investigators of PERC Strategic activities.

An actual or apparent conflict of interest is present when a member has any financial interest, directly or indirectly (e.g., an ownership interest in an entity that may receive a benefit from a potential award, such as through a sub-contract with the awardee for services under the grant) in a proposal under review by the PERC. An actual or apparent conflict of interest is also present when a PERC member has a personal or professional relationship with an individual or organization that has a proposal under review by the PERC.

Members have a duty at all times to exercise good faith in discharging their duties and to be alert and sensitive to any interest that may provide an advantage to an individual or entity within the School.

## **PROCEDURES**

**Disclosure:** The conflict of interest policy and disclosure form (i.e., conflict of interest questionnaire) will be presented, reviewed, and signed by each PERC member at the beginning of the member's term. Thereafter, each member will sign the disclosure form annually no later than July 31 of each year, and will also provide an updated copy of the annual Outside Activities Report filed with the University. Forms, including the Outside Activities Reports, will be on file with the WPP. Members should file updated disclosure forms and Outside Activity Reports as necessary.

In addition, whenever an actual or apparent conflict of interest relates to a matter of PERC action, a member shall promptly and fully disclose the conflict to the PERC prior to any action on the matter. The duty to disclose a conflict of interest arises regardless of whether the proposal is approvable, whether the member supports or opposes the proposal or the matter in question, and whether the member will be present during the discussion of the matter.

**Procedure After Disclosure:** PERC members who disclose a conflict of interest may not participate in the discussion of the proposal under review or the matter in question, and may not vote on the proposal at issue. However, the PERC may ask the member to answer relevant questions before leaving the meeting. The conflicted member may be counted in determining whether a quorum is present, however s/he may not be counted in calculating the majority of the quorum necessary to carry the vote. The member is not permitted to return to the meeting until the discussion and voting on the proposal at issue have concluded.

**Minutes of Meeting:** When a disclosure of a conflict of interest occurs, the minutes of the meeting should reflect the disclosure made, the nature of the conflict of interest, the fact that the conflicted member did not vote on the proposal under review, the existence of a quorum, the names of the members present for the discussion and vote on the proposal under review, and the final determination of the matter requiring PERC action.

**Failure to Disclose:** If a PERC member or WPP staff has reasonable cause to believe that a member has failed to disclose apparent or actual conflict(s) of interest, the Chair of the committee must be immediately informed. The member will be afforded the opportunity to explain to the Chair the alleged

failure to disclose. The Chair will seek the advice of the Committee regarding the disposition of the matter. If the PERC determines that the member has failed to disclose an apparent or actual conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate corrective action, including removal from the committee.

Approved by the Medical Education and Research Committee (now known as Partnership Education and Research Committee, PERC) on November 8, 2010.

Policy revised by PERC on January 11, 2016. Revised policy is effective on all decisions made on or after this date.