

Resolution - April 11, 2002

The following resolution was passed by the Faculty Senate at its meeting on April 11, 2002:

FACULTY POLICY ON CONFLICT OF INTEREST DUE TO PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The proposed policy addresses situations of conflict of interest that arise due to personal relationships between faculty and students, staff, and other faculty. It is intended to complement University of Cincinnati BOT rules governing conflicts of interest in the conduct of research at UC (BOT Rule 3361:10-17-08) and BOT rules on nepotism in employment (BOT Rule 3361: 30-21-05).

Bias due to conflict of interest is antithetical to the openness of a university. Furthermore, the mere perception of such bias may create a negative environment for third parties. Thus, it is important that there be a policy in place to ensure that conflict of interest situations be avoided where possible. In cases where the conflict of interest situations cannot be avoided, any appearance of bias should be removed.

A. WHEN DO SITUATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST ARISE?

1. Personal relationships between faculty and students, staff, and other faculty that may lead to conflict of interest include but are not limited to:
 - a. family relationships such as those between spouses or spousal equivalents, parents and children, siblings, in-laws, grandparents and grandchildren;
 - b. consensual amorous and/or sexual relationships;
 - c. relationships between persons whose economic interests are closely interrelated.
2. Conflicts of interest arise from such personal relationships if one party in the relationship can academically or professionally confer upon the other unfair advantages or disadvantages. Such situations include but are not limited to
 - a. when one party in the relationship engages in any evaluative decisions about the other, like those concerning grades, hiring, job performance, promotion, awards, assistantships, and access to opportunities and resources;
 - b. when one party engages in direct supervision of the other.
3. Even in the absence of a conflict of interest as defined in these guidelines, faculty, students and staff should be aware that personal relationships between teachers and students, supervisors and employees and colleagues can give rise to perceptions of bias, unfair advantage, or unfair treatment.

B. HOW ARE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST TO BE DEALT WITH?

It is the responsibility of the unit head to ensure compliance to the following. In cases where the unit

head is involved in a conflict of interest, the Dean will be responsible.

1. The faculty is responsible for avoiding situations of conflict of interest and for dealing promptly with any conflict of interest that may arise.
2. Where a conflict of interest arises, the faculty must notify the appropriate head or Dean.
3. Other persons who believe a conflict of interest exists may alert the appropriate head or Dean.
4. When a conflict of interest can or does arise, one or more of the following methods should be used to resolve the conflict of interest.
 - a. The faculty member should normally decline or terminate a supervisory, teaching, evaluative or decision-making role in which a conflict of interest arises, unless the unit head or Dean believes that this will create undue hardship to any of the parties involved.
 - b. In situations where the conflict of interest involves teaching, supervision or evaluation and where alternative courses or supervision exist that are reasonable and appropriate, these alternatives should be employed provided they will not confer unfair advantages or disadvantages to the parties involved.
 - c. Where no reasonable and appropriate alternative exists, the head or Dean shall ensure that a fair and unbiased mechanism of evaluation is put into place.
 - d. Where third parties are concerned about a perceived conflict of interest, the head or Dean should notify them of the outcome. Such a step is for the protection of everyone involved.
5. The University Grading Advisory Committee (UGAC) shall be disbanded and the duties of the UGAC shall be assumed by the Academic Affairs Committee. The University Registrar shall work with the Academic Affairs Committee on any activities related to the UGAC charges.