

Examples of Real, Apparent and Easily Managed Conflicts of Interest of ECU Faculty

In April/ May of each year, ECU faculty and professional staff complete their annual conflict of interest (COI) disclosure forms and submit them to their unit supervisors. After review, the unit supervisors report the names of all faculty members who are in compliance with ECU COI policies and all who are 'Not-Yet-In-Compliance'.

This year we have had several instances where faculty were judged Not-Yet-In-Compliance for situations that were either easily managed at the local level or had no real conflict at all. However, one major conflict was revealed. These are illustrative of real world situations. For unresolved COI cases, the Division of Research, Economic Activity and Community Engagement will work with the units to bring everyone into compliance

<u>Possible Conflict</u>	<u>Resolution</u>
1. Faculty member requires use of his own textbook in a class he teaches.	1. Require the faculty member to donate any royalties he may receive from sales of his book to his classes. Faculty members often donate such royalties to an university scholarship account.
2. Faculty member or spouse owns equity in a company doing business with the University.	2. No actual conflict of interest exists unless the business relationship between the University and the company involves the faculty member's university responsibilities or the faculty member participates in the selection of the company for the University business.
3. Faculty member owns an external business and hires ECU graduate students as employees.	3. No actual conflict of interest if the employment is purely work for pay and does not have a formal instructional purpose in the student's educational program, e.g., an internship or dissertation research. If there is an instructional purpose, proper safeguards for the student-employee must be negotiated between the faculty and the student's department. One gray area is when the hiring faculty member has direct educational responsibilities for the hired students. These cases need to be examined for possible hidden conflict situations.
4. Faculty member has a consulting relationship with a profit making company where he is paid > \$10,000/yr. He is also a recipient of a grant from this company that supports research in his laboratory.	4. This situation is clearly a major conflict situation per ECU policies. A formal conflict management plan needs to be developed between the faculty member and his supervisor and subsequently approved by their superiors and the Research Ethics Oversight Committee.