



SUBJECT: Personnel

POLICY: 402.4 Conflict of Interest

RELATED PROCEDURE: 402.4.1

EFFECTIVE: December 2007 **REVISED:** March 2023

REVIEWED:

Introduction and Purpose

The administration, faculty, and staff of Great Falls College MSU bear the responsibility of serving the respective teaching, research, and service missions of the campuses. That mission is enhanced by the sustained, active interaction of members of the college community with business, government, not-for-profit groups, professional societies, academic institutions, and other individuals and organizations. Therefore, entrepreneurial activities are encouraged that support the college's mission through dissemination of knowledge, enhancement of educational opportunities for students, and economic development.

These many interactions and activities can, however, create the potential for conflict of interest in which college employees' external activities or interests could influence—or could appear to influence—the manner or extent to which those individuals carry out their college responsibilities. Such influences—real or apparent—may undermine public and professional confidence in the college, diminish the college's ability to accomplish its mission, and violate state or federal law. Typically, conflicts of interest can be dealt with effectively through disclosure and other steps to resolve or manage the conflict.

Policy

The college is committed to fulfilling its mission with integrity and in full compliance with state and federal ethics and conflicts of interest laws and regulations and with the [Montana Board of Regents Policy 770](#). This policy is intended to implement the requirements contained therein. A conflict of interest may exist when an employee has a financial or personal interest in the outcome of an endeavor such that the employee's actions or decisions could be perceived as subject to influence in favor of the employee's interest, as more fully defined below. A conflict of commitment may exist when an employee's outside obligation could or could appear to encroach on the time that the employee reasonably needs to fulfill their job duties at the college.

Therefore, it is the policy of the college that in all activities—the education of students; the design, conduct, and reporting of research; the hiring and supervision of staff; the procurement of materials and services; and all other tasks incident to their mission—each campus and its employees shall endeavor to be free of inappropriate influence or bias that may result from conflicts of interest. This policy is intended to enable employees to recognize perceived or potential conflicts of interest and, thus, to protect themselves and the college from inappropriate influence or bias through disclosure, evaluation, and, if required, management or elimination of conflicts of interest.

Applicability

This policy applies to all employees of the college. Employees are expected to review and understand their obligations under this policy and to be familiar with their obligations under the laws, regulations and policies referenced in the related policies/laws section of this policy.

Definitions

Conflict of Interest A conflict of interest may exist:

- When a college employee has a personal interest that could or could appear to compromise or impinge on the employee's obligation to the college to exercise the employee's best judgment in pursuit of the interest of the college and its students;
- Examples include, but are not limited to, consulting or ownership interest with a company that has contracts with Great Falls College, or a family member or significant other who works with you



Policy Manual

Conflict of Commitment

- When a non-college activity could or could appear to unreasonably encroach on the time an employee should devote to the affairs of the college; or
- When an employee's non-college activities could or could appear to unreasonably impinge on or compromise the loyalty or commitment to the employee's college duties and responsibilities.

In determining whether a conflict of interest exists, an important consideration is whether an independent observer might reasonably conclude that the employee's professional actions or decisions are influenced by considerations of personal gain, financial, or otherwise.

Institutional Official The institutional official(s) or office will oversee the reporting, disclosure, and management of potential conflicts of interest. Great Falls College MSU's institutional official is the Executive Director of Student Services and Human Resources (or designee).

Related Policies/Laws

In addition to this policy, Great Falls College MSU employees' ethical conduct is governed by:
Montana law, Standards of Conduct—[Code of Ethics, Title 2, Chapter 2, Part 1 M.C.A.](#)

Federal regulations governing sponsored research. *For example, the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health (and all other Public Health Service "PHS" agencies) require institutions receiving funding to have a conflict of interest policy which complies with its regulations:*

- [NSF - Grantee Standards, Award and Administration Guide](#)
- [Responsibility of Applicants for Promoting Objectivity in Research for which PHS Funding is Sought \(42 C.F.R. Part 50, Subpart F\)](#)
- [Responsible Prospective Contractors \(45 C.F.R. Part 94\)](#)

Montana [Board of Regents Policy 770, Conflicts of Interest.](#)

Montana [Board of Regents Policy 407, Approval of University System Employee Equity Interest and/or Business Participation.](#) This policy implements [M.C.A. 20-25-109.](#)

[Great Falls College Policy 407.9 Nepotism](#)

[Great Falls Policy 402.45 Consulting Activities](#)