Conflict of Interest (COI)

PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND PRINCIPLE:
The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to instruct Office of Sponsored Project (OSP) personnel with the handling of conflicts of interest (COI) in regards to sponsored projects. This procedure applies to all Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) faculty, staff, and students who are involved with sponsored projects on behalf of SLCC. OSP is responsible for COI education and adherence only in regards to sponsored projects. However, OSP works in coordination with other departments to support the enforcement of SLCC’s COI policy.

RESPONSIBILITIES:
A. OSP
   1. Provide guidelines to identify and report COI for sponsored projects
   2. Provide reasonable infrastructure to protect against COI in sponsored projects

B. Project personnel (see definition below)
   1. Understand COI disclosure requirements for sponsored projects and how they relate to SLCC policy
   2. Identify potential COIs
   3. Report potential COIs to supervisors and OSP
   4. Instruct other project personnel to be knowledgeable about COI policy for sponsored projects

C. Human Resources
   1. Develop, maintain and oversee COI policy

DOCUMENTS/RESOURCES NEEDED:
Principal Investigator (PI) Assurance Form
PI Handbook and Compliance Responsibilities (OSP training module)

DEFINITIONS: N/A
- **Conflict of Interest**: Actual or potential conflicts arise when personal interests adversely affect SLCC employment responsibilities with regards to their involvement with sponsored projects or are not in compliance with federal regulations governing sponsored projects. These can include:
  o Financial, professional or personal considerations that compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, an employee’s professional loyalty and responsibility to SLCC, or an employee’s
professional judgment and ability to perform his or her duties and responsibilities to support SLCC’s best interests.

- An employee’s financial, professional or personal activities that compete (or have the appearance of competing) with SLCC, or are of such nature that they would adversely impact the reputation, or mission, or the quality of services provided by SLCC to its stakeholders.
- An employee seeks to participate directly or indirectly in or influence directly or indirectly any employment or academic decision that involves a direct benefit or detriment to the employee or to a Close Relation of the employee. An employment or academic decision includes decisions relating to initial appointment or hire, retention, termination, promotion, compensation, benefits, leave of absence or decisions on admission, grades or academic advancement
  - Close Relation: spouses, domestic partners, and parents, children, siblings and each of their respective spouses or domestic partners. Having a family or other intimate relationship to an employee will not be a bar to equal opportunity in education or employment. At the same time, employees should take all reasonable steps to avoid a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest in their SLCC sponsored project work that could arise from such a relationship.
- An employee’s distribution of effort between his/her College employment and his/her participation in an outside activity. Although participation in outside activities is encouraged, activities that interfere with the employee’s primary professional responsibility to the College create a conflict of commitment, which is a form of conflict of interest.

- **Project personnel:** All faculty, staff, and students employed or otherwise engaged by SLCC and working on sponsored projects. This policy continues to apply to employees while on sabbatical, other leaves or on vacation, while visiting other institutions, and while consulting with external entities.
- **Consulting:** Consulting includes only that outside activity which provides expert advice and/or counsel of a non-continuous nature.
- **Other Employment Activities:** Other employment activities such as after-hours employment by another firm, or operating a part-time business other than consulting, etc., with the exceptions of approved professional development.
- **College Business:** College business includes those activities conducted away from campus for purposes of the College, while receiving regular College pay.

**PROCEDURE:**

**Note:** All project personnel are obligated to the full extent of their employment contract with SLCC to be alert to the possibility that outside obligations, financial interests, employment, and certain family or intimate relationships can affect that contract. Therefore, all employees are responsible for determining whether they, or their Close Relations, have a potential or actual COI (as defined above) that is reportable under this procedure. Because no policy or procedure can anticipate the full range of outside relationships and activities that may give rise to COIs, employees must disclose any outside relationship or activity that may give the appearance of a conflict as soon as feasible after discovery of the potential or actual conflict.

A. **OSP Personnel**
   1. Provide training or instruction to project personnel in government and College COI policies and regulations
      i. PIs must sign the PI Assurance form before submitting a proposal (must be completed before submitting each proposal)
      ii. OSP has a training module that includes COI, and all project personnel are required to complete this before accepting an award
   2. If OSP becomes aware of a COI and has not received written notification, the assigned Grant Officer will contact the PI and instruct them to report the COI per College Policy and this OSP Procedure
   3. When a potential or actual COI is reported:
      i. Place a copy of the notification in the electronic project file
ii. Review COI policy for the sponsor or prime awardee; advise PI and others as appropriate

iii. Follow-up with the PI or others regarding the COI determination and action taken, if any; record this information in the project file

iv. Disclose in writing any potential or actual COI according to the applicable policy to the sponsor or prime awardee

Note: OSP does not have sole jurisdiction to make COI determinations. However, OSP must be made aware of such determinations to take appropriate actions as required by applicable sponsored projects COI regulations.

B. Project personnel
   1. Complete required and other training/instruction on COI as provided by OSP
   2. PI’s complete PI Assurance Form before submitting a proposal
   3. Review activities to determine if a COI may or does exist
   4. Report potential or actual COI according to SLCC policy
      i. File a full disclosure of the potential or actual conflict, in writing, to their supervisor with a copy to the associated Vice President andOSP
   5. PIs should ensure that personnel working on their projects have received COI training

C. Human Resources
   1. Provide guidance on determining if a COI exists and recommended actions to mitigate or eliminate the COI

REFERENCES:
SLCC Policies and Procedures, c2s03-03, “Conflict of Interest”