



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA BOARD OF REGENTS POLICY

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Board Operations

CODE OF ETHICS FOR MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS

Adopted: February 9, 1996

Amended: May 12, 2006

Supersedes: (see end of policy)

CODE OF ETHICS FOR MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS

This policy governs the activities of members of the Board of Regents (Board) of the University of Minnesota (University) regarding financial disclosure, gifts, expense reimbursement, and conflicts of interest.

SECTION I. GUIDING PRINCIPLES.

The following principles shall guide the accountability of Regents:

Subd. 1. Public Trust. The Board is responsible for the governance of the University. In carrying out this constitutionally conferred public trust, Regents must be accountable in the areas of financial disclosure, gifts, expenses, and conflicts of interest, and shall not use the authority, title, or prestige of their office to solicit or otherwise obtain private financial, social, or political benefit that in any manner is inconsistent with the public interest. In serving the people of Minnesota, Regents shall adhere to the highest ethical standards.

Subd. 2. Paramount Interest. Regents bring to their task varied backgrounds and expertise, but they are expected to put aside parochial interests, keeping the welfare of the entire University, not just a particular constituency, at all times paramount.

Subd. 3. Time Commitment. In undertaking the duties of the office, Regents shall make the necessary commitment of time and diligence to fulfill their public governance responsibilities.

SECTION II. FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS.

Upon election to office and annually on September 30 thereafter, Regents shall file a financial disclosure statement with the executive director/secretary of the Board in a form consistent with the financial disclosure required for senior University officials. The general counsel shall review the disclosure forms for compliance with this policy.

SECTION III. GIFTS.

No Regent shall accept any gift or accommodation, except as permitted by Board policy. This prohibition does not apply to complimentary tickets to University events furnished in accordance with guidelines on file in the Board Office.



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SECTION IV. EXPENSES.

Regents serve without compensation, but they are entitled to reimbursement for expenses incurred while representing the University in an official capacity in accordance with guidelines on file in the Board Office.

SECTION V. DEFINITIONS.

Subd. 1. Recusal. Recusal shall mean noninvolvement of a Regent in any discussion of, and decision regarding, the relevant matter to ensure that the Regent's independence of judgment is not compromised, that the public's confidence in the integrity of the Board is preserved, and that the University's public mission is protected.

Subd. 2. Financial Conflict of Interest. A *financial conflict of interest* exists whenever a Regent, a Regent's family member, and/or a business associated with a Regent or a Regent's family member has an actual or potential financial interest or any other interest in a matter pending before the Board that may impair independence of judgment or objectivity in the discharge of the Regent's public governance responsibilities.

Subd. 3. Family Member. *Family member* shall mean a spouse, parent, sibling, child, domestic partner, or any person residing in the Regent's household.

Subd. 4. Business Associated with a Regent. *Business associated with a Regent* shall mean an organization, corporation, partnership, proprietorship, or other entity if either the Regent or a member of the Regent's family:

- (a) receives compensation in excess of \$500 in any month or has any contractual right to future income in excess of \$6,000 per year;
- (b) serves as an officer, director, partner, or employee; or
- (c) holds a financial interest valued in excess of \$10,000.

For purposes of this policy, compensation shall not include compensation from the University, any governmental source, investment or savings income, retirement or insurance benefits, or alimony.

Subd. 5. Financial Interest. *Financial interest* shall mean a foreseeable, nontrivial financial effect that may result from Board action.



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Subd. 6. Employment-Related Conflict of Interest. An *employment-related conflict of interest* exists whenever a Regent's employment relationships may impair independence of judgment.

SECTION VI. FINANCIAL AND EMPLOYMENT-RELATED CONFLICT OF INTEREST PROCEDURES.

Subd. 1. Interpretation and Application. The conflict of interest provisions of this policy shall be interpreted and applied to best serve the interests of the University. In some cases, full disclosure and consideration of the particular facts may indicate that a potential conflict of interest is insubstantial so that the University's interests are best served by the Regent's participation. If doubt remains regarding the need for recusal, the Regent involved must elect recusal. Recusal on a particular matter because of a conflict does not reflect adversely on the Regent involved; rather, it simply recognizes that in a complex and interconnected society conflicts cannot be entirely avoided and will occur.

Subd. 2. Disclosure or Acknowledgment of Actual or Potential Conflicts. Actual or potential conflicts of interest shall be brought to the attention of the chair of the Board at the earliest opportunity. Such actual or potential conflicts may be reported by an individual Regent or by any other person. Disclosure or acknowledgment of such a conflict of interest and recusal shall be noted appropriately in Board minutes.

Subd. 3. Consultation with General Counsel. A Regent with a conflict of interest question is encouraged to consult with the general counsel who, if requested, shall provide a written opinion on whether a conflict of interest exists under this policy. A copy of any such opinion shall be provided to the chair. The chair also may request an opinion from the general counsel on any conflict of interest question.

Subd. 4. Disputed Conflicts of Interest. Any disputed issues relating to the existence of a conflict of interest requiring recusal shall be decided by the chair, who may choose to refer the question to an ad hoc group of Regents consisting of the chair, the vice chair, and one other Regent appointed by the chair. If the chair or vice chair is the subject of the conflict of interest dispute, another Regent shall be appointed by the ranking Regent. The chair (or the ad hoc group if appointed) shall determine whether there is a conflict of interest and report the decision to the Board; however, in all cases the Board is the final authority on conflict questions.

Subd. 5. Deliberations and Voting. Regents who declare or have been found to have an actual or potential financial or employment-related conflict of interest shall



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recuse themselves regarding the matter determined to be a conflict and shall not take any action to influence the outcome of the matter.

SECTION VII. CANDIDACY FOR PUBLIC OFFICE.

A Regent shall resign from the Board upon officially announcing candidacy for any partisan elective public office.

SECTION VIII. ANNUAL REVIEW OF POLICY.

At the beginning of each fiscal year, the Board, with the assistance of the general counsel, shall publicly review the requirements and procedures of this policy.