



UNIVERSITY OF  
DENVER

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POLICY MANUAL  
CONFLICT OF INTEREST

**Responsible Department:** Enterprise Risk Management

**Recommended By:** SVC Legal Affairs and General Counsel, SVC Business and Financial Affairs, and Chief Risk Officer

**Approved By:** Board of Trustees

**Policy Number**  
RISK 3.20.060

**Effective Date**  
/\_\_\_/2025

## I. INTRODUCTION

The University of Denver expects the highest standards of conduct and honesty from all of its University Representatives. University Representatives must fulfill their institutional responsibilities with care and loyalty and must avoid involvement in activities that conflict with, or appear to conflict with, those responsibilities. The term “University Representatives” includes trustees, officers, faculty members, and employees of the University of Denver.

## II. POLICY OVERVIEW

### A. General Rule

University Representatives should use good judgment and professional commitment to protect themselves and the University from conflicts of interest. This includes avoiding situations or activities that could interfere with a University Representative’s unfettered exercise of judgment in the best interests of the University. University Representatives should make decisions and take actions on behalf of the University for the sole purpose of advancing the best interests of the University. While the University encourages participation in professional, community service, and other external activities, University Representatives must avoid actual or apparent ethical, legal, and financial conflicts of interest arising out of those activities that may compromise their effectiveness in carrying out their University responsibilities.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See also University Policy FINA 3.20.070 - *Code of Business Conduct*, Section G, page 3 of 5: “University Personnel are responsible for performing their duties in good faith and in the best interests of the University. University Personnel should be sensitive to situations that could raise questions of potential or apparent conflicts between personal interests and the University’s interests. Generally, a conflict of interest exists when an individual acting on behalf of the University obtains

## **B. Conflict of Interest Defined**

A conflict of interest exists in situations when a University Representative has a significant financial, personal, or professional interest that is directly or indirectly at odds, or inconsistent, with the University's interests. It is not possible to define all situations that might be considered conflicts of interest, and ultimately, the University relies on each University Representative's sound judgment and common sense. The most likely conflict situation is one in which a University Representative has a financial interest, direct or indirect, in the business dealings of the University. Conflicts of interest occur in situations such as when:

1. An individual's ability to act independently or objectively in the University's best interests may be impaired, or might appear to be impaired,<sup>2</sup> by an existing or potential financial, personal, or professional benefit received by the individual;
2. An individual has a significant financial interest<sup>3</sup> in another entity that supplies, or proposes to supply in the future, funds, goods, or services to the University;
3. An individual has a relationship with a third party, such as a vendor of goods or services to the University, that results in, or has the potential to result in, personal gain to the individual because of the third party's relationship with the University; or
4. An individual derives, or appears to derive, a financial or other material benefit from confidential information learned in the course of work or service on behalf of the University.

University Representatives' individual interests include the interests of their family members, who are defined as a University Representative's spouse, domestic partner, and dependent children.

## **C. Conflicts of Interest and Gifts**

The potential exists for a conflict of interest, or the appearance of a conflict of interest, when a University Representative accepts a gift from a third party in conjunction with the third party's work on behalf of the University or the third party's interest in developing a relationship with the University.

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improper personal gain for themselves or for another party, or when a particular action has an adverse effect on the University's interests."

<sup>2</sup> This Policy also addresses situations involving apparent conflicts of interest. An apparent conflict exists when a reasonable person would conclude from the circumstances that a University Representative's ability to discharge his or her duties are compromised by personal interest.

<sup>3</sup> A significant interest in another entity includes (a) service as a trustee, director, partner, or management-level employee of the entity and/or (b) the actual or beneficial ownership of more than 35% of the entity.

University Representatives may accept ordinary courtesies of business from a third party -- such as gifts of nominal value (including meals and entertainment) incidental to a business relationship -- but University Representatives should not accept frequent gifts from the same third party.

University Representatives are responsible for using good judgment to avoid even the appearance that acceptance of a gift could result in favorable treatment or obligate the University in any way. When determining whether it is appropriate to accept a gift, University Representatives should ask themselves whether the gift is reasonable in value or type and how accepting such a gift may appear to others. Because of the potential appearance of a conflict of interest, University Representatives responsible for handling or managing procurement functions should never accept gifts of any kind from third parties involved in any University business activities. A University Representative should never accept a cash gift or request a gift of any kind from a third party working on behalf of the University or a third party interested in developing a business relationship with the University.<sup>4</sup>

### **III. PROCESS OVERVIEW**

#### **A. Prompt Disclosure Required**

When a University Representative, other than a trustee or the Chancellor, becomes aware of an interest or relationship that might constitute or give rise to a conflict of interest, the University Representative must promptly disclose that individual interest to his or her supervisor and the Department of Enterprise Risk Management using the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form available on the [Department of Enterprise Risk Management website](#).

Trustees and the Chancellor must make prompt disclosures to the Audit Committee Chair.

A University Representative must also promptly disclose a significant personal, financial, or other interest in any transaction for which he or she is being called upon to exercise his or her University authority. In the event a University Representative makes a verbal disclosure, they also must submit a written disclosure promptly using the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form.

Failure of a University Representative to disclose an actual or potential conflict of interest and any participation in a transaction related to a

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<sup>4</sup> University Policy FINA 2.30.016 - Supplier Code of Conduct (Item 10) prohibits employees from receiving or requesting gifts and gratuities.

conflict of interest may result in disciplinary action for the University Representative, up to and including termination.

## **B. Recuse and Refrain**

The general rule of “recuse and refrain” applies when dealing with conflict of interest situations. A University Representative must not participate in University decision-making regarding a transaction in which the University Representative is potentially personally interested, unless the applicable decision-maker identified in Paragraph III.C below determines that an actual conflict of interest is not present. Recusal in this manner is the typical approach for addressing potential or actual conflicts of interest that are identified before the University Representative actually participates in a transaction.

Recusal bars the University Representative from any participation in the matter that relates to the University Representative’s financial or personal interest, and the University Representative must promptly inform others involved in the transaction of the recusal. Recusal specifically requires that the University Representative exclude himself or herself from participating in any discussions (whether orally or in writing) or votes on the matter.

## **C. Evaluation of Conflict of Interest Concerns**

1. *University Representatives (non-trustees)*: For all University Representatives except trustees, the Chief Risk Officer, or their designee, will review pertinent information and consult with relevant units to determine if a reported concern amounts to an actual or apparent conflict of interest.
2. *Trustees*: For trustees, the Audit Committee Chair determines whether a reported concern amounts to an actual or apparent conflict of interest. The Chair of the Board of Trustees must make the determination if the conflict of interest concern involves the Audit Committee Chair. The person making the determination has the discretion to review and discuss, as needed, conflict of interest concerns with the full Audit Committee, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Chair of the Nominating & Governance Committee, and/or the Senior Vice Chancellor of Legal Affairs & General Counsel.

## **D. Annual Questionnaire and Reporting Process**

Each fiscal year, the University’s Department of Enterprise Risk Management will require the following University Representatives to complete a Conflict of Interest Questionnaire concerning the preceding fiscal year:

- Trustees;
- Chancellor;
- Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor;
- Senior Vice Provosts and Vice Provosts;
- Senior Vice Chancellors, Vice Chancellors, Associate Vice Chancellors, and Assistant Vice Chancellors;
- Deans, Associate Deans, and Assistant Deans;
- Budget Officers;
- Directors, Associate Directors, and Assistant Directors;
- Academic Department Chairs;
- Head coaches and assistant coaches of University athletics programs;
- All persons in the Controller's Office, Department of Enterprise Risk Management, and Internal Audit;
- All persons who are the subject of a conflict of interest disclosure submitted via website during the past two (2) fiscal years;
- All positions that assist with, or oversee, University spending, including but not limited to, Project Managers, Business Officers, and Business Coordinators.

University Representatives receiving the questionnaire have a responsibility to answer questions thoroughly and to the best of their abilities. If a University Representative becomes aware of a material change in circumstances concerning a previously-submitted disclosure, the University Representative must promptly provide amended information to Department of Enterprise Risk Management, using the [Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form](#). The Department of Enterprise Risk Management maintains information provided pursuant to this Policy in a confidential manner for a period of five (5) years.

For all University Representatives, except trustees, Enterprise Risk Management will work with persons who disclose potential or actual conflicts of interest to resolve those conflicts to the fullest extent possible. When all University Representatives have responded to the annual questionnaire, the Department of Enterprise Risk Management will report the findings to the immediate supervisor of each person who provided any affirmative response to the questionnaire. The immediate supervisor will have an opportunity to comment on whether any concerns exist that need further attention. If recusal is appropriate in any transaction, the immediate supervisor will also communicate the need for recusal to others involved in the transaction.

For trustees, the Chief Risk Officer will promptly share with the Audit Committee Chair any significant disclosures made by trustees during the annual disclosure process. The Chair will work to resolve those conflicts to the fullest extent possible.

At the close of the annual disclosure process, the Chief Risk Officer will present a report on the entire process to the Audit Committee Chair. The report will include information about: (a) the number of University Representatives responding to the questionnaire, (b) disclosures made, and (c) conflict determinations and remedial actions taken. The Chief Risk Officer will provide the following persons with copies of the report: the Senior Vice Chancellor for Business and Financial Affairs, the Senior Vice Chancellor of Legal Affairs & General Counsel, the Controller, and Internal Audit. The Chief Risk Officer will also present the report to the members of the Audit Committee on an annual basis.

#### **E. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and Conflict of Interest Rules of Other Organizations.**

University Representatives must also comply with the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) and consider the conflict of interest policies of other organizations.

The FCPA is a U.S. federal law that prohibits providing “anything of value” to a foreign government official for the purpose of “securing any improper advantage” in business dealings. Violations of the FCPA contain three elements: (1) a payment or something of value is given, offered, or promised; (2) to a foreign official, political party, party official, or candidate; and (3) for a corrupt purpose. Under the FCPA, a person acts with a corrupt purpose if the activity involves an attempt to improperly influence a foreign official to obtain a business advantage. Many countries also have national and local laws prohibiting bribery that University Representatives must follow when conducting activities in or involving those countries. The FCPA or other anti-bribery laws may cover actions that occur within the United States, in a foreign country, or outside the applicable country’s borders. Items of value that amount to a bribe include both monetary and non-monetary exchanges, such as travel, entertainment, scholarships, or employment opportunities. The FCPA contains no monetary threshold -- any exchange of value for a corrupt purpose may constitute a violation of the FCPA.

While the FCPA does not prohibit payments to facilitate or expedite routine, ministerial government actions, facilitating payments may violate foreign anti-bribery laws. University Representatives should not make facilitating payments unless (i) the payment is necessary to prevent the risk of injury or imminent harm to oneself or another person, or (ii) the University’s Office of General Counsel determines that the payment is legally permissible.

University Representatives should also be familiar with and respect conflict of interest policies of third-party organizations with which the

University does business. In particular, the University discourages gift-giving to third-party representatives, and a University Representative should never give or offer a gift to a third-party representative that would violate the third-party organization's conflict of interest policy.

#### IV. DEFINITIONS

1. **"University Representatives"** - see Section I.
2. **"Conflict of Interest"** - see Section II.B.
3. **"Family Members"** - see Section II.B.

#### V. RESOURCES

- A. University Policy FINA 2.10.070 - *Corporate Governance and Responsibility*
- B. University Policy FINA 2.20.020 – *Budgetary Responsibilities*
- C. The Department of Enterprise Risk Management's [Conflict of Interest website](#).

| Revision Effective Date | Purpose  |
|-------------------------|--|
| 6/28/2021               | Minor revisions  |
| 7/1/2022                | Minor revision to change Responsible Department to Enterprise Risk Management    |
| 1/11/2023               | Minor revision to remove a reference to a policy previously sunset in footnote 4 |
| /___/2025               | Updates to update titles and department names and to clarify applicability       |