CONFLICT OF INTEREST TASK FORCE
Michael Weiner, M.D., Chair

MINUTES
Meeting of April 2, 2002

PRESENT:  M. Weiner (Chair), R. Malone, D. Deen, P. Benner, M. Schambelan, D. Kitterman, L. Sheiner, H. Bourne

ABSENT:   D. Rennie, M. Shultz, J. Levine

GUEST:   Bernard Lo

The meeting of the Conflict of Interest Task Force was called to order by Chair Weiner on April 2, 2002 at 4:00 p.m. in room S318. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of March 1 will be approved at the May meeting of the Task Force.

Announcements from the Chair

No announcements.

Discussion of Ethical Principles Surrounding Conflict of Interest

R. Malone distributed a list of ethical statements regarding Conflict of Interest policy. She proposed that, following review and approval, the Task Force adopt these statements as underlying ethical assumptions prior to further discussion of Conflict of Interest policy at UCSF. These statements are as follows:

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN COI POLICY DISCUSSIONS

1. Conducting scientific research at a publicly funded institution is a privilege that constitutes a public trust and creates certain obligations for researchers. Conflict of interest policies at such institutions have three linked purposes: ensuring protection of research subjects; preserving the public’s trust in its institutions, and protecting the integrity, objectivity, rigor and openness of the scientific community.

2. Changes to existing conflict of interest policies should be undertaken [are justifiable?] only if they enhance protection of research subjects, enhance public trust in the university, or enhance the integrity, objectivity, rigor and openness of the science conducted under university auspices.
3. An appointment at a publicly supported university creates an obligation among scientists to put public interests before private commercial interests. COI policies are designed to provide procedural as well as substantive assurances that this obligation will be respected. Disclosure alone provides procedural correction for possible conflicts of interest in which scientists have obligations to both public and private entities; it does not, however, provide substantive correction (e.g., disclosure does not assure goodness, safety, or efficacy) and its effectiveness as a tool for managing such conflicts is also limited by disparities in power and communications between the scientific community and the public.

4. The university serves public interests and acts independently from private commercial interests, which have as their primary aim provision of profit to shareholders. Sustaining this independence is essential to retaining public trust in science conducted at publicly supported institutions. This is, in fact, one of the very reasons companies seek affiliations with university researchers, and COI policies should be designed to provide and ensure institutional support for researcher independence by building in safeguards aimed to avert possible undue influence as well as the appearance of such influence. Public trust is not merely an issue of “perception” but is a substantive issue which bears on both the willingness of the public to provide ongoing support for its institutions and the scientific reputation of the entire research community at such institutions.

5. Issues of technology transfer and diffusion of innovation create different ethical issues and obligations in their own right and should be considered separately from the scientific development and testing of procedures, technologies and therapies.

6. Deliberation on existing and proposed COI policies should occur in an atmosphere of full information. The historical context of development and discussion within the university community of existing and proposed COI policies must be considered.

Following extensive discussion, R. Malone agreed to distribute this document to task force members electronically. Members of the task force will then edit the document and track editing electronically. R. Malone will present a final draft of the document for review and approval by the task force at its next meeting.

**Discussion of Conflict of Interest and Clinical Research**

Task Force members reviewed and discussed current UCSF Conflict of Interest policy regarding Clinical Research. UCSF policy as outlined in *UCSF Guidelines on Conflict of Interest* ([http://www.ucsf.edu/ora/coiac/coiac_policy.htm](http://www.ucsf.edu/ora/coiac/coiac_policy.htm)), currently states that:

“11. Faculty who have, or participate in, a sponsored clinical study shall not concurrently receive any compensation from the sponsor, including honoraria and consulting fees, during the course of the study. In addition, they shall not have any investment in, or serve in a decision making capacity for (such as service on the Board of Directors or management committee), or be an officer or employee of the company sponsoring the study.”

The Task Force noted that the central difference between policy as outlined by *UCSF Guidelines on Conflict of Interest* and that outlined by the Association of American Medical Colleges *Guidelines for Developing and Implementing a Policy Concerning Individual Financial Interests in Human Subjects Research* is that UCSF policy currently does not allow a mechanism for rebuttal; it is more restrictive than that outlined by the AAMC. The Task Force agreed to explore four courses of action in its discussion of this dichotomy:

1. Consider modification of current UCSF policy to incorporate AAMC guidelines – i.e. make UCSF guidelines less restrictive.
2. Recommend that current UCSF guidelines remain unchanged.
3. Consider modification of UCSF guidelines to incorporate changes proposed by 38 members of UCSF faculty and transmitted to Senate Chair Larry Pitts in a letter dated October 25, 2001 (Attached).

4. Examine alternatives not yet considered – R. Malone agreed to present possible alternatives to the task force at the next meeting.

The Task Force unanimously agreed that regardless of changes made to UCSF guidelines, the Task Force will propose changes to paragraph 11 of the UCSF Guidelines on Conflict of Interest to clarify existing policy.

**New Business**

Senate Analyst E. Langdon-Gray agreed to invite Deanna Rutter, Administrator, UCSF Conflict of Interest Advisory Committee to the next meeting of the Task Force.

*The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.*

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