Task Force on Conflict of Interest
Daniel Bikle, MD, PhD, Chair

DRAFT
MINUTES
Tuesday, February 18, 2004
Room S 118


Chair Bikle called the meeting of the Task Force on Conflict of Interest to order at 2:15 p.m. on Tuesday, February 18, 2004 in Room S118. A quorum was not present.

Chair’s Report

Chair Bikle informed task force members that he had recently met with the deans of the four schools and with the dean of the Graduate Division. He discussed the work of the task force with the deans. Specifically he outlined the task force’s intention to send out a ballot to faculty at UCSF requesting approval or rejection of recommended changes to current UCSF Guidelines on Conflict of Interest. The deans expressed concern that prior to such a ballot, faculty be educated regarding the scope of the current policy and the ramifications of potential changes. Each of the deans suggested ways in which such education could most effectively be achieved. Suggestions included: presentations at faculty meetings, meetings with chairs of departments who would then disseminate information, presentations at town hall meetings.

In subsequent discussion of the importance of disseminating information prior to release of the ballot, task force members agreed that case studies will be developed to illustrate for faculty the implications of different proposed amendments to current conflict of interest policy. Members agreed also that informational resources will be posted on the Academic Senate website (http://www.ucsf.edu/senate) and that several emails will be sent to faculty drawing attention to the importance of the issues surrounding conflict of interest policy.

Development of Conflict of Interest Ballot

Chair Bikle distributed two draft ballots, the first of which was prepared by Ruth Malone and the second containing modifications by Lew Sheiner and Morrie Schambelan, to task force members for discussion.

Members extensively revised these ballots and agreed to recommend adoption of the following language to the task force as a whole:

Current UCSF policy related to financial ties between university researchers and sponsors of their research divides along several lines.
First, federally funded research has its own set of requirements for disclosure of any outside, related financial interest that could potentially affect the outcome of the research. Regardless of whether or not human subjects are involved, faculty must disclose financial ties that are above the following thresholds: $10,000/year income and/or 5% equity.

Second, state law covering non-federal research of all types specifies disclosure thresholds for financial ties with entities funding the research. These thresholds are: above $500/year income and/or $2000 equity interest.

In both cases, the Conflict of Interest Committee to which these disclosures are made has the options of:
1) approving the research funding despite the existence of financial ties
2) approving the research funding only if the investigator agrees to “manage” the financial ties in some way (such as disclosing it or requiring the researcher to relinquish the financial tie) or
3) denying the research funding.

Current UCSF policies for non-federally funded research provide additional restrictions on financial ties between researchers and sponsors for research involving human subjects. These policies specify that:

No personal financial ties (e.g., consulting fees, honoraria) between the researcher and the company funding the study are permitted during the conduct of the study; the Conflict of Interest Committee will not allow the researcher with such financial ties to a sponsor to accept the funding and conduct the research.

This ballot requests that you respond to the following questions about existing UCSF policy regarding financial ties between sponsors and researchers conducting clinical studies involving human subjects:

1. Should the current UCSF policy, which permits no personal financial ties whatsoever between sponsors and researchers conducting studies involving human subjects, be made less stringent, by changing the thresholds for disclosure to the levels required by state law?

Yes ____ No ____

2. Should the current UCSF policy regarding research involving human subjects be made less stringent, by allowing the Conflict of Interest Committee to use the same options (approve, manage, deny) to manage the apparent conflict as it may now use for research not involving human subjects?

Yes ____ No ____

3. Should any UCSF policy regarding financial ties between researchers and non-federal sponsors be applied equally to research involving human subjects and non-human subjects?

L. Sheiner and R. Malone agreed to edit the above wording for clarity and distribute revised versions of the ballot to task force members for comment and approval by email.

Once approval of a ballot has been obtained, Senate staff will draft an electronic ballot, which when approved, will be distributed to all faculty at UCSF.

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.
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