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Policy for: All Campuses
Procedure for: All Campuses
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I. Policy

A. This document sets forth the University of South Carolina Ethics Policy for faculty, staff and student employees. Employees of the University are subject to the provisions of the State Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act, codified in Sections 8-13-100 through 8-15-1520 of the 1976 South Carolina Code of Laws, as Amended. Copies of the Act are available in the Division of Human Resources, Legal Department, or from the State Ethics Commission.

B. State Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act
The State Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act was enacted in 1991 to restore public trust in governmental institutions and the political governmental process. The Act recognizes that public employment is a public trust and any effort to

realize personal gain through official conduct is a violation of that trust. Violations of the rules of ethical conduct are investigated and punished where appropriate. The State Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act applies to all public officials and public employees of the State and political subdivisions, with exception of members of the judiciary. The law:

1. Provides a code of conduct to prohibit public officials and employees from being involved in certain conflicts of interest

2. Provides for the filing of Statements of Economic Interest by certain designated public employees and public officials

3. Provides for advisory opinions to be issued on questions involving the State Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act

4. Provides for procedures for participation by citizens in the enforcement of the law

5. Provides for the State Ethics Commission to administer the law.

C. Rules of Conduct

Employment at the University of South Carolina is a public trust and any effort to realize personal gain through official conduct is a violation of that trust. The rules of conduct, Sections 8-13-700 through 8-13-795 of the 1976 South Carolina Code of Laws, as Amended, should be consulted for specific information. The Rules of Conduct:

1. Prohibit employees from using their official position or office to obtain an economic interest for the employee or the employee's immediate family, an individual with whom the employee is associated, or a business with which the employee is associated

2. Prohibit employees from giving or offering, soliciting, or receiving compensation to influence the action of public officials or employees

3. Prohibits offering, soliciting, or receiving money in addition to that received by the employee in their official capacity for advice or assistance given in the course of their regular employment

4. Prohibits the use or disclosure of confidential information for personal financial gain

5. Prohibits employees from membership on or employment by a regulatory

commission or agency that regulates any business with which the employee is associated

6. Provides for actions to be taken by employees where a decision would affect the employee's personal financial interest

7. Prohibits employees from appearing before certain regulatory commissions

8. Calls attention to breaches of ethical standards.

D. Penalties

Violation of the State Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act is punishable by a fine up to $10,000, up to 20 years imprisonment, or both. In addition to disciplinary action which may be taken by the University, the State Ethics Commission may recommend administrative or disciplinary action, impose oral or written warnings or reprimands, require civil penalties, require forfeiture of anything received, or refer the matter to the Attorney General for criminal prosecution.

E. Financial Disclosure Statements

1. The State Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act requires the disclosure of Economic Interest through the filing of a Statement of Economic Interests by employees of the University in the following categories:

   a. The chief administrative official

   b. All deputy administrative officials

   c. All directors of each separate institution or facility

   d. The chief financial official

   e. The chief purchasing official.

2. The Statement of Economic Interest must be filed with the State Ethics Commission prior to assuming the duties of the position and prior to April 15 of each subsequent year. The State Ethics Commission is responsible for providing the necessary forms to those individuals who are required to file a Statement of Economic Interest.

3. The Statement of Economic Interest form provides for disclosure of:

a. Compensation from governmental entities

b. Interests in governmental contracts

c. Gifts by persons with regulated business or contractual interest

d. Income of $500 or more from governmental entities

e. Real estate interests if anticipated conflict or if $200 in public improvements has been made on or adjacent to the property

f. Sale, lease, or rental of real or personal property to governmental entity

g. Loans of more than $500, other than for a credit card or financial institution

h. Associations with corporations if interest exceeds 5% and $100,000

i. Business relationships with lobbyists

j. Associations with regulated businesses.

II. Procedure

A. Questions and Information

Any employee needing further information concerning the applicability of the State Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act should contact the USC Legal Department or the State Ethics Commission.

III. Reason for Revision

This policy revision updates the disclaimer language as recommended by the South Carolina Office of Human Resources.