

**Indiana University School of Education Policy on  
Conflicts of Commitment  
(Approved by Faculty Affairs Committee, 2/20/2007)**

**Preamble**

This Policy on Conflicts of Commitment sets forth two basic principles to all outside activities:

- (1) All School of Education Academic Appointees\* are permitted and encouraged to engage in outside activities to the extent that they do not interfere with such appointee's School of Education responsibilities.
- (2) Academic Appointees may not use University or School of Education resources in the performance of non-university activities without obtaining appropriate permission and providing for compensation. "School of Education" activities are defined as activities that are undertaken directly to fulfill one's research, teaching, or service responsibilities within the School of Education.

**Definitions**

Conflict of *Commitment* is similar to Conflict of *Interest*.

*Conflict of Interest* is when School of Education Academic Appointees engage in outside activities in which they use University or School of Education resources without obtaining adequate permission or providing for adequate compensation. The apparent or actual result is that these appointees are being compensated by two sources for the same work.

*Conflict of Commitment* is when School of Education Academic Appointees engage in outside activities to which they devote time and energy without obtaining adequate permission and or providing for adequate compensation. The apparent or actual result is that these outside activities interfere with appointees' School of Education responsibilities to devote 4/5ths of their time to School of Education activities: i.e., those undertaken to directly fulfill one's research, teaching, or service responsibilities.

**Examples of Potential Conflicts of Commitment**

1. *National Service*: Assuming a position of high responsibility and high visibility in a professional organization. These are opportunities and activities that the School of Education encourages appointees to pursue, because they increase the visibility of the School of Education. These positions, however, also have a cost to the School of Education and its students when the appointee's travel schedule disrupts class times and students have less of that individual's time and attention.

2. *Large Research Program:* Having a high visibility research program that garners many invitations to present and speak at conferences, meetings, and other professional venues. It is in the interest of the School of Education to have such people on the faculty. Yet again there is a cost when the appointee's travel schedule disrupts class times and students have less of that individual's time and attention.
3. *International Grants:* International grants are wonderful opportunities for School of Education faculty, however, when their coordination, conference, and scholarly demands limit faculty time for class and students in such a way that office hours are not kept, classes are missed, and other teaching responsibilities are not met, then a Conflict of Commitment might ensue.

### **Avoiding Apparent or Actual Conflicts of Commitment**

The best policy for this situation is a flexible one in which each case is handled by the individual, her or his chair, and perhaps the Associate Dean for Research & Development. Those involved need to weigh the benefits and losses to the university and decide what is fair. It is in the best interest of the School of Education to have high visibility faculty members; it is in the best interest of high visibility faculty members to find ways to give back to the School of Education from their outside endeavors. It is the purpose of this policy to make School of Education Academic Appointees aware of the potential for Conflicts of Commitment, their responsibility for bringing their situations to the attention of their chairs, and on a case-by-case basis come to an equitable agreement that ensures that the appointee may pursue opportunities and the School of Education is fairly compensated.

Minimally, it is expected that faculty will discuss potential conflicts of commitment with their respective department chairs so that the extent of the potential interference with teaching, service, and research can be mitigated. Potential conflicts of commitment include those that are likely to take the faculty member out of class or require the faculty to miss more than one day a week on average.

The reference above to "full-time faculty" reflects the conclusion that School policy need not provide that part-time faculty be permitted at least one day each week to engage in professional activities outside the School, because School and University policy do not, and should not, place any limit on the time that part-time faculty spend on outside activities. Part-time faculty, however, are subject to the other principles of the Policy.

**Section I** School of Education Academic Appointees may engage in activities outside of the School, provided that those activities do not interfere with such appointees' performance of their School responsibilities or otherwise constitute a conflict of commitment or interest.

**Section II** No School of Education Academic Appointee shall use School or University resources in the performance of non-School activities without

the permission of the department chairperson or the Office of the Dean and without compensating the School.

- Section III** Full-time faculty shall be permitted to spend one day each week on professional activities other than School or University activities, provided that those activities do not otherwise constitute a conflict of commitment or interest.
- Section IV** An Academic Appointee's compliance with this section or with any other School or University or department policy on conflicts of commitment shall not be determined on the basis of income earned from outside activities or the percentage of such appointee's University compensation that such income constitute, unless required by law.
- Section V** Each Department Chair within the School shall negotiate potential conflicts of commitment with respective faculty in accordance with these policies and procedures implementing this Policy and specifying the School and University responsibilities of the full-time academic appointees, taking into account the norms and expectations of the disciplines and professions involved. Department chairs shall inform the Deans of the School of any conflicts of commitment and measures taken to cover any necessary loss of teaching, service, or research within the Department. Such negotiations shall not be inconsistent with this policy.
- Section VI** Enforcement of this Policy on Conflicts of Commitment is the ultimate responsibility of the President and the Board of Trustees, who may delegate that responsibility to other School or University officials pursuant to this policy and policies enacted by individual departments. Principal responsibility for implementation and enforcement of this Policy shall reside with the Office of the University Dean of the School of Education, which may seek advice from relevant campus officials or committees with authority for conflicts matters.
- Section VII** Violations of this policy and its implementing procedures, including the failure to comply with prescribed procedures for managing or resolving conflicts of commitment will be dealt with in accordance with applicable School or University policies and procedures.
- Section VIII** Appeals from administrative decisions concerning conflicts of commitment are subject to applicable School or University policies and procedures concerning review of administrative decisions.



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If you feel like you have the potential for a conflict of commitment, discuss it with your department chair. Our advice is: **If in doubt, check it out.**

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- \* "Academic Appointees" shall have the meaning set forth in the University's Academic Handbook at <http://www.indiana.edu/~deanfac/acadhb/>