



## **Policy on Conflicts of Interest and Conflicts of Commitment of Staff Members**

### **I. Introduction**

Haskins Laboratories (the “Laboratory”) is committed to conducting research, and disseminating knowledge, all with the highest standards of integrity. This policy addresses conflicts of interest and commitment that may arise from research and non-research activities of the Laboratory and its staff members.

In general, conflicts of interest may arise from a staff member’s opportunity to benefit financially from his or her or others’ activities at the Laboratory. Conflicts of commitment may arise from a staff member’s involvement in outside professional activities that benefit society and the Laboratory — they should be guided by the principle that staff member’s overriding obligations are to the Laboratory and to its mission. Furthermore, while the Laboratory recognizes the benefit of such activities, it also is committed to ensuring that they are conducted properly and consistently, in accordance with the responsible management and policies of the Laboratory.

In pursuit of its own mission, and consistent with these principles, the Laboratory has formulated the following policy to identify and address actual, apparent, and potential conflicts of interest and commitment. (*Note that the appearance of a conflict is often times as important as the reality.*) The fundamental premise of this policy is that each member of the Laboratory community has an obligation to act in the best interest of the Laboratory and in furtherance of the Laboratory’s mission, and must not let outside activities or outside financial interests interfere with those obligations. This policy is intended to increase the awareness of staff members to the potential for conflicts of interest and commitment, and to establish procedures whereby such conflicts may be avoided or properly managed.

### **II. Definitions**

“Conflict of Interest” means an external influence that might adversely affect the conduct of a staff member’s activities or the Laboratory’s operations.

“Conflict of Commitment” means a relationship that requires a commitment to outside activities such that a staff member, either implicitly or directly, cannot meet his or her usual obligations to the Laboratory.

“Significant Financial Interest” means anything of monetary value, including but not limited to, salary or other payments for services (e.g., consulting fee or honorarium); equity interest (e.g., stocks, stock options or other ownership interest); and intellectual property rights (e.g., patents, copyrights and royalties from such rights). The term does not include:

- (1) Salary, royalties, or other remuneration from the Laboratory;
- (2) Income from seminars, lectures, or teaching engagements sponsored by public or nonprofit entities;
- (3) Income from services on advisory committees or review panels for public or nonprofit entities.

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### III. Reporting and Review Procedures

#### A. Disclosure

The responsibility for avoiding conflicts of interest or commitment rests, initially, with the staff member. An essential step in addressing an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest or commitment is for the staff member involved to make full disclosure of relevant information to the President or CEO of the Laboratory. As described in greater detail below, certain staff members are required to make regular, annual written disclosures, with updates as needed; others need only disclose on an ad hoc basis. When a disclosure is received, the President or CEO will review it and determine what should be done to avoid or manage any conflict appropriately.

##### 1. Required Annual Disclosures

All scientific staff who work at the Laboratory more than 50% of the time; all Laboratory staff who hold administrative positions and/or are responsible for the purchasing of major equipment; and all Laboratory staff who are responsible for the design, conduct or reporting of research are required annually to submit a conflict of interest/conflict of commitment disclosure describing their external activities and Significant Financial Interest. Annual disclosures must be in writing, on the forms approved by the Laboratory. Every staff member who is subject to the disclosure requirements of this section shall submit his or her disclosure to the President or CEO. When the disclosing individual is the President or CEO of the Laboratory, he or she shall submit the form to the Chairman of the Board of Directors.

##### 2. Required Disclosures Other Than in Annual Disclosure Process

(a) Material Change from Annual Disclosure. Whenever Significant Financial Interest, external activities, or internal responsibilities change materially from those described in the annual disclosure, the disclosure is to be updated as soon as possible, in writing. Whenever possible, individuals should attempt to disclose expected changes or newly anticipated conflicts before they occur, and seek advice from the President or CEO on the restrictions that may result from any anticipated new Significant Financial Interest, before accepting such a Significant Financial Interest. Whenever an application for funding of a new research project is submitted, the Investigator must ensure that his or her disclosure is current.

(b) Ad hoc Disclosures by Those Not Required to File Annually. Non-scientific staff and students are not required to submit annual disclosure forms unless they are responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of research. They are required, however, on an ad hoc basis, to disclose their external activities and Significant Financial Interest to the extent such activities and Significant Financial Interest relate generally to Laboratory research (including, for example, the use of research facilities and involvement of students in research sponsored by a start-up company), laboratory financial decisions, and other matters whenever they arise.

The confidentiality of all disclosures will be respected to the greatest extent possible. In particular, the information on the forms will not be shared except with those who have a need to know.

#### B. Review of Disclosures

##### 1. *Review*

The President or CEO will review all disclosures. If necessary, the President or CEO will discuss disclosure-related matters with the individual involved and may also consult with others who may have relevant information, including legal counsel. The individual is entitled to meet with the President or CEO if he or she desires. Consistent with the guidelines set forth below, the President or CEO will determine whether an apparent, actual, or potential conflict of interest or commitment exists and, if so, by what means – such as the individual's abstention from the

external activity, modification of the activity, and/or monitoring of the activity by a subcommittee – the conflict should be avoided or managed.

(a) *Conflict of Interest*: If the President or CEO determines that a conflict exists, he or she will communicate this determination and the means he or she has identified for eliminating or managing the conflict, in writing, to the individual. With respect to financial conflicts of interest, this plan could, among other possibilities, (a) authorize the individual to participate, with oversight, in a matter as to which the conflict exists, or (b) instruct the individual not to participate in the decision or other matter relating to the conflict. If the President or CEO prescribes monitoring of the activity, he or she will describe specifically how the monitoring shall be performed and what records are to be kept. One of the factors the President or CEO will consider in determining whether a conflict of interest exists is whether the staff member's external interest might adversely affect the conduct of a staff member's activities or the Laboratory's operations. Furthermore, a conflict of interest exists if the President or CEO reasonably determines that a Significant Financial Interest could directly or significantly affect the design, conduct, or reporting of research at the Laboratory.

(b) *Conflict of Commitment*: If the President or CEO determines that a conflict exists, he or she will communicate this determination and the means he or she has identified for eliminating or managing the conflict, in writing, to the individual. If the President or CEO prescribes monitoring of the activity, he or she will describe specifically how the monitoring shall be performed and what records are to be kept. Among the factors the President or CEO may consider in determining whether a conflict of commitment exists include: (i) whether the staff member's outside commitments are such that he or she, either implicitly or directly, cannot meet his or her usual obligations to the Laboratory; and (ii) whether the relationship with an outside organization requires frequent or prolonged absence from the Laboratory (generally defined as involving, on the average, absences of more than one (1) day per work week).

## 2. *Appeal*

If the staff member is not satisfied with the decision of the President or CEO the individual may request that the matter be referred to the Chairman of the Board of Directors for a decision. Any matter referred to the Chairman of the Board of Directors shall be accompanied by a written statement of the findings and recommendations of the President or CEO with copy to the individual. The Chairman of the Board will notify the individual, and the President or CEO of his or her decision, ordinarily within three weeks after receiving the report.

## 3. *Review by the Chairman of the Board*

The Chairman of the Board will review disclosures by the President or CEO and determine whether an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest or commitment exists and how that conflict will be managed or eliminated.

## **IV. Protection of Human Subjects**

Research involving human subjects is subject to a strong presumption against permitting the participation of any staff member holding a related Significant Financial Interest. All members of the Laboratory should be sensitive to the potential effects of financial interests and/or non-financial relationships with commercial sponsors or other external entities on the conduct of research and the participation and protection of human research subjects. In compliance with federal regulations and guidance, the President or CEO will consider such relationships and determine whether they might influence or appear to influence (a) the outcome of a research project involving human subjects; (b) the objectivity of the staff member during the performance of such a project; or (c) the staff member's interactions with research subjects who participate in the project.

**V. Compliance**

If a staff member fails to comply with this Policy, the Laboratory may take appropriate disciplinary action, including termination of the staff member’s employment, if appropriate.

**VI. Record Retention**

The Laboratory will maintain all financial disclosures submitted by staff members and all actions taken by the Laboratory for at least three years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report or, in the case of awards that are renewed quarterly or annually, from the date of the submission of the quarterly or annual financial report and, in all other cases, for at least three years from the date of submission of the disclosure.

If any litigation, claim, financial management review, or audit is started before the expiration of the three-year period, the records shall be retained until all litigation, claims, or audit finding involving the records have been resolved and final action taken.

**VII. Contact Information**

For further information regarding this Policy, please contact the CEO of the Laboratory at (203) 865-6163, ext. 222.

**Agreement**

I have read & understand the Policy on Conflicts of Interest & Conflicts of Commitment of Staff Members, and I agree to abide by the policies and procedures described.

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Signature	Name (please print)	Date
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