

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE
Senate Executive Committee
(Final; Informational)

SC.18.11 Review of the Conflicts of Commitment and Interest (COCI) Policy

The following information was reported by the Senate Committee on General University Policy (GUP) on April 23, 2018 to the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) as requested. The following information will be transmitted to the University Senates Conference (USC) for submission to the Board of Trustees through the President.

The GUP Committee has discussed the system policy on Conflicts of Commitment and Interest. We have no recommendations on fundamental changes to these policies, but we do have two suggestions:

1. We think the policy should be revised to fit the new system/university changes being made in other governing documents.
2. The section on conflicts of commitment is written with an emphasis on *external* commitments – consulting, say, or working with a start-up company. This seems appropriate, given that the focus is on conflicts of commitment to the employer, that is, the University of Illinois. But as we discussed it, we thought of several instances in which a faculty member's activities *internal* to the university in which a faculty member's home unit might claim that the employee has a conflict of commitment to the unit – for example, buy-outs from grants, appointments to a research institute like Beckman, balancing the demands of a joint appointment, etc.
3. One might argue that no conflict of commitment exists in cases such as this, as all the work benefits the University. Nevertheless, we wondered whether we needed some guidelines to help unit heads address the question of how to handle multiple commitments within the University.
4. We note that DPI and other initiatives seem to make this a salient question now.
5. Finally, conflict of commitment policies, taken too literally, could have other unintended consequences because commitments of “time” are not bounded by a 40 hour work week for faculty. Taken to an extreme, some supervisors might argue that personal or family commitments that take time from work present inherent conflicts of commitment.

SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Bettina Francis, Chair

Nancy O'Brien, Vice Chair

Nicholas Burbules

Shawn Gilmore

Kim Graber

Sam LeRoy

William Maher

Gay Miller

Scott Morris

Bryan Parthum

Rahul Raju

Jeff Stein

Mark Steinberg

Matthew Wheeler