



# Executive Summary of Feedback Received from the Policy Portal to the Conflicts of Interest Policy for College Officers and Non- Contract Employees

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Three comments were received during the Conflict-of-Interest comment period.

## 1. Policy Title and Scope

A question was raised on whether the conflict-of-interest policy title should be expanded to include all employees, given that conflicts may arise from various activities including procurement, commercial transactions, research funding, contractor selection, admissions, recruitment, financial aid, and search committees.

### **Administrative Response:**

MCC Employee and Visitor Conduct Policy and Procurement Conflict of Interest Policy address conflict of interest and unethical conduct of all College employees and provide guidance to the various activities mentioned such as: procurement, contractor selection, admissions, etc.

College Officers and Non-Contract Employees have significant decision-making authority and it is important to make a distinction of guiding principles because of the professional role College Officers and Non-Contract Employees hold.

## 2. Outside employment and conflict resolution mechanism

One responded commented that prohibition against “*outside employment that competes with the College’s services*” is overly broad and vague. Specific concerns include: whether adjunct faculty may work at other institutions, whether full-time employees may adjunct elsewhere, and whether the policy should accommodate situations where employees take classes with relatives by allowing neutral third-party grading arrangements.

### **Administrative Response:**

The policy’s intent is not to prohibit all outside employment, but rather to guard against employment that “may or actually does interfere with the performance of their professional obligations and duties.” Outside teaching at other higher education institutions, by itself, does

not necessarily compete with or interfere with the College's services, provided there is no actual or potential conflict of interest as defined by the policy. Example of an outside employment conflict could be: *an adjunct faculty member teaching the same specialized course at a competing institution during the same term, using proprietary materials developed at the college and actively recruiting students away from MCC.*

Consistent with the policy's foundational principle that employees should "consult with appropriate College officials," it is recommended that employees considering outside employment, whether adjunct positions at other institutions or any other arrangement, disclose such activities in writing to the Office of Human Resources and Organizational Development. The Human Resources office will review the material facts and determine whether the arrangement presents a conflict. As the policy provides, once a conflict is identified, the College may establish management arrangements to ensure fairness and compliance.

Regarding a suggestion about neutral-party grading for situations involving relatives: this aligns with the policy's framework. The policy prohibits individuals from using their "*authority, supervisory duties, or ability to influence the employment terms and conditions of a relative or significant other.*" If an employee anticipates such a situation, they should disclose it prior to entering into the relevant academic transaction and work with the Office of Human Resources to develop an appropriate management plan such as arranging for objective evaluation by a neutral party that ensures the College's integrity and fairness. This allows the parties to "*find a solution*" while maintaining compliance with Board policy and legal requirements.

### **3. Clarity in examples provided in the policy**

One respondent requested that either word, "unknowingly" or "intentionally" be added to each of the following examples provided within the policy:

"Employees should avoid having financial interests in organizations that partner with the College."

"Employees should not participate in college contract negotiations with vendors in which they have a financial stake."

#### **Administrative Response:**

After careful consideration of the suggestion to add the words "*unknowingly*" or "*intentionally*" to the above policy statement, we agree that this clarification strengthens the policy by making it clear that both intentional and inadvertent conflicts of interest can create issues for the College. To reflect this, the policy has been updated to include this language. The revised statements now emphasize that employees should avoid these situations whether they occur

knowingly or unintentionally, as either circumstance may compromise fairness or create the appearance of impropriety.

As with other parts of the policy, employees who are unsure about whether a financial interest or relationship could present a conflict are encouraged to consult with the Office of Human Resources and Organizational Development. Disclosure allows the College to review the facts and, if necessary, put management arrangements in place to ensure compliance and maintain integrity.