

POLICY STATEMENT

Policy for Academy Leaders

Policy:

It is the policy of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, subject to ongoing review and periodic modification by the Board of Trustees, that each Academy trustee, secretary, committee chair, committee member, taskforce chair, taskforce member, councilor, and representative to other organizations ("Academy Leader"), has an obligation of loyalty and fairness to the Academy and its members as well as an obligation to discharge the duties of an Academy Leader in good faith and in a manner that is in the best interests of the Academy and its members.

Background:

The Academy and its membership have benefited enormously from the countless hours of volunteer work Academy Leaders have devoted in service to Academy programs and activities. The quality and value of these programs are a direct reflection of these leaders and the staff.

In nominating members to serve on the Board of Trustees and in selecting members to serve on its secretariats, committees, and task forces, the Academy seeks individuals with the experience, skills, and knowledge needed to do the job. Equally important, the Academy selects those individuals who have a reputation for excellence, both in the quality of their efforts and in their ethical standards.

In recent years, physicians' roles have expanded beyond traditional parameters of clinical care. In many instances, physicians are assuming leadership, consulting, or significant equity positions in business, which potentially impact or are impacted by Academy activities. If the Academy were to select only leaders not involved in such business ventures, it would seriously limit its ability to use the most capable and experienced individuals, which would not be in the best interests of Academy members.

Evaluation:

This policy statement is intended to maintain the standard of excellence demonstrated by all Academy Leaders and to protect these Leaders from allegations of wrongdoing in the discharge of their duties.

Recommendation:

All references herein to an Academy Leader means the Academy Leader, a relative of the Leader, an organization in which the Leader or a relative has a material financial interest, and an organization of which the Leader or a relative is a director, trustee, officer, or employee. The term "commercial" excludes pursuits that are predominantly clinical, scientific, or academic.

As a condition of eligibility for initial election or appointment to a position of Academy leadership and for continued service in that position, each Academy Leader shall do the following:

1. Disclose to the Academy the existence and nature of any personal or family interest in any activity that is, or reasonably could be expected to be, subject to this policy statement, as an addendum made at the time of the Academy Leader's submission

of the disclosure form required by the "Identification and Resolution of Conflicts of Interest" policy, if the activity is not covered by that disclosure form.

2. Disclose to the Academy board, committee, or the council on which the Academy Leader serves the existence and nature of any personal commercial interest, with respect to any actual or proposed contract or arrangement between the Academy and the Academy Leader, or any proposed endorsement by the Academy of any product or service of the Academy Leader, in advance of any discussion of or decision regarding the proposed contract, arrangement, or endorsement by that body, and abstain from the discussion and the decision. Academy Leaders must adhere to the financial-disclosure requirements of the "Identification and Resolution of Conflicts of Interest" policy.
3. Refrain from misusing the position as an Academy Leader to solicit, directly or indirectly, commercial opportunities for the Leader, such as the following:
 - a. By accepting the invitation of any professional or other organization to speak, at an educational or scientific meeting of the Academy or other organization, in the capacity of an Academy Leader and, in connection with that activity, referring to or soliciting, or causing or permitting others to refer to or solicit on the Leader's behalf, commercial opportunities for the Academy Leader.
 - b. By soliciting or carrying on commercial opportunities for the Academy Leader and, in connection with that activity, referring to or causing or permitting others to refer to the Leader's position as an Academy Leader. In order to avoid the appearance of impropriety, there must be a clear separation by time and locale of the activities undertaken as a Leader of the Academy from activities undertaken as a commercial interest, including those undertaken in an online context.
 - c. By promoting products or services in which the Academy Leader has a personal, commercial interest on the Academy Online Community or any part of aao.org *without*, in the same message or body of text, disclosing the Academy Leader's interest in the good(s) or service(s), whether or not the Leader's role as an Academy Leader is disclosed on his or her persona.
4. Honor and keep confidential all privileged or confidential information of or involving the Academy that is obtained by the Academy Leader by reason of or in connection with that person's position of Academy leadership. The Academy Leader shall not use any of such information in connection with his or her commercial activities or disclose any of such information to any person or organization for any purpose whatsoever.

The Academy recognizes that some Academy Leaders serve the governance structures of multiple organizations. It is possible that events may place the organizations in conflict. The fiduciary duty of Academy Leaders is such that not only may the Leader not disclose information to another organization where it might constitute a conflict of interest, but the Leader should disclose the potential conflict to the Academy's General Counsel and the CEO and/or President and seek assistance in a preferred resolution.

5. Academy Leaders may not participate as leaders or presenters in commercial promotional/marketing informational events held in a meeting's exhibit space.

References

American Academy of Ophthalmology Policy Statement, "Identification and Resolution of Conflicts of Interest."

Council of Medical Specialty Societies *Code for Interactions with Companies*.

Approved by:	Board of Trustees, September 1994
Revised and Approved by:	Board of Trustees, September 1997
Revised and Approved by:	Board of Trustees, February 2001
Revised and Approved by:	Board of Trustees, January 2007
Revised and Approved by:	Board of Trustees, January 2012

©2012 American Academy of Ophthalmology®
P.O. Box 7424 / San Francisco, CA 94120-7424 / 415.561.8500