

History:

In May 2011, the faculty of Columbia Business School adopted recommendations of the Conflicts of Interest and Commitment Committee. After three years, in accordance with the initial recommendations, the School appointed a committee to review the impact and effectiveness of the policies, and report to the Dean and Faculty Executive Committee. The committee was comprised of Charles Jones, Donald Lehmann, Katherine Phillips, and Garrett van Ryzin.

Process:

The committee solicited faculty feedback on the policy through the annual faculty survey and reviewed compliance information provided by the Dean's Office.

2015 Faculty Survey Data:

- The faculty survey received 62 responses out of 142 full time faculty members for a response rate of 44%.
- 97% of respondents confirmed that they were aware of the current policy.
- 98% of respondents confirmed compliance with outside activity disclosure on the School's CV
- For the question "Do you think the current policy has served the school well." The majority of respondents (61%) indicated 3/5 or a neutral opinion. The mean was 3.25.
- For the question "Are you personally satisfied with the current policy?." The majority of respondents (78%) indicated 3 or 4 out of 5 or a satisfied or neutral opinion. The mean was 3.33.

2014 Disclosure Data:

- Responses were requested from 139 faculty members
- Seven (5%) did not reply. The Dean's Office is following up.
- Seventeen (12.3%) indicated that their activity might, or might appear to, pose a conflict. Review of the disclosures suggested that more clarity was needed on the form, as many of those noted did not appear to pose a conflict. The Dean's Office is following up.

The committee reviewed the data and the original policies and compliance forms and met to discuss the policies and their implementation.

Recommendations:

The committee recommended some small revisions to the Business School policies to bring them up to date with current University policies. The committee recommended that the Outside Activities Disclosure Form be updated for clarity and that the School provide more information about the policy itself and some examples to faculty when the form is requested. The committee recommended some changes to the "Request for Permission to Participate in Teaching Activities Outside of Columbia" form.

The committee recommended more frequent reminders (such as included in administrative updates e-mails) be sent to faculty and administrators about the policies and processes surrounding potential research and teaching conflicts of interest and commitment.

The committee agreed that while the policies are (by nature) unfortunately bureaucratic, they seem to be accomplishing the original goals "clarify Columbia University's disclosure and commitment policies and to strengthen the School's disclosure and commitment policies to ensure public confidence in our research."

The committee recommended that the policies with these minor modifications be renewed and that the next review take place in or before the academic year 2019-2020.