Conflict of Interest Implementation Policy for Leadership of American Society of Clinical Oncology

(May 31, 2018)

I. Background and Applicability

The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) is dedicated to advancing the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer and the quality of cancer survivorship. To assure the independence, objectivity, fair balance, and scientific integrity of ASCO educational and scientific programs and products, ASCO has adopted its Policy for Relationships With Companies (COI Policy).¹

The COI Policy applies to all employees and staff of ASCO as well as all persons who participate on the ASCO Board of Directors, committees, and task forces, or in any volunteer activity in an official capacity for the Society (COI Policy, Section II). The COI Policy is intended to be adapted for implementation in connection with particular roles or activities (COI Policy, Section II.B.).

All ASCO Leadership must maintain a high standard of loyalty and fairness to the Society and avoid even the appearance of conflict of interest in carrying out their responsibilities for ASCO. ASCO Leadership must avoid using their position for personal gain or advantage, or to obtain a favored status with any particular group. Consistent with this standard, ASCO’s Conflict of Interest Policy for Officers, Directors and Key Employees (Corporate Policy) helps identify actual or potential conflicts and protect the Society’s interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the financial or professional interest of a Board Member or Officer.

This Implementation Policy interprets and implements the COI Policy and the Corporate Policy (together, Conflict Policies) as they relate to those in leadership positions within and for ASCO (ASCO Leadership). Specific decisions made in accordance with the Conflict Policies are memorialized in this document. Issues not specifically addressed herein will be managed on a case-by-case basis consistent with ASCO policies and procedures.

II. ASCO Leadership

Many volunteers and staff members play important leadership roles in ASCO activities. However, this Implementation Policy applies specifically to ASCO’s Board Members and Officers, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Medical Officer, Senior Vice Presidents, Executive Vice Presidents, Vice Presidents, Division Directors, and the editors-in-chief of each Society Journal.²

² A Society Journal as defined in the CMSS Code, “a peer-reviewed scientific journal published by a Society or by a publisher on a Society’s behalf.”
The President or Chief Executive Officer may from time to time designate other groups or offices as ASCO Leadership for purposes of this Implementation Policy.

III. Disclosure of Financial Interests and Relationships

All ASCO Leadership are required to disclose in accordance with the COI Policy. The COI Policy relies chiefly on disclosure of financial and other interests to identify and manage potential conflicts (COI Policy, Section III.B.). All ASCO Leadership must disclose the financial interests and professional relationships described in Section III.C. of the COI Policy. Disclosure must extend to interests in and compensated as well as uncompensated relationships with any for profit entity that develops, produces, markets or distributes drugs, devices, services or therapies used to diagnose, treat, monitor, manage, and alleviate health conditions (including but not limited to pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and medical device companies). In addition, ASCO Leadership must disclose service (with or without compensation) as an officer, director, or trustee of any professional or advocacy organization relating to science or health care.

In accordance with the Corporate Policy, ASCO Leadership is also required to disclose any transactions between ASCO or an ASCO affiliate and their officers, directors and key employees, or between the ASCO or an ASCO affiliate and a family member or affiliated entity of an ASCO Leader, or any transaction in which there may be an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

Disclosure should be made at the beginning of service, then annually. Disclosure should be updated when there are material changes in the information disclosed. Disclosure must be made whether compensation is paid directly to the individual Leader or to the Leader’s institution or to another entity such as a charity. Disclosure should include financial interests and relationships held by the individual’s spouse, domestic partner or dependent child.

IV. Management of Conflicts

The management of actual or potential conflicts of interest will depend on the particular circumstances, including the nature and extent of the financial interest or relationship. ASCO Leadership should recuse themselves from decisions in situations where they have a conflict of interest or a potential conflict. Participation in discussions and deliberations, and speaking publicly on behalf of ASCO, may be permissible as long as the financial interest or relationship is disclosed.

V. Restriction on Financial Relationships

The President, President-Elect, Chair of the Board, and Immediate Past President, the CEO, and the Editors-in-Chief of each Society Journal may not, during their terms of office, accept any gift, honorarium, salary, fee, or other compensation from any for profit entity that develops, produces, markets or distributes drugs, devices, services or therapies used to diagnose, treat, monitor, manage, and alleviate health conditions. Acceptance of reasonable travel reimbursement is acceptable provided the relationship is otherwise uncompensated.

This restriction does not apply to scientific research, including service as an investigator in a trial, research funding, or compensation for research effort. This restriction does not apply to direct clinical services.
ASCO Vice Presidents, Senior Directors, and Directors are subject to restrictions on outside activities as set forth in the ASCO Employee Handbook and related ASCO policies.

VI. Leadership Ineligible for Grants Awarded by ASCO or Conquer Cancer Foundation of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (Conquer Cancer)

ASCO and Conquer Cancer are committed to maintaining an objective and independent process for selecting grant recipients. In order to avoid actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest, ASCO Board Members and Officers are not permitted to apply as principal investigators (PIs) on grants awarded by ASCO or Conquer Cancer, or to have a funded effort in such grants, for applications submitted from the time they are elected until the conclusion of their Board terms. ASCO Board Members and Officers may be involved in the research under such grants only in a manner that is not funded by the grant. For example, ASCO Board Members and Officers are permitted to serve as mentors for grant and award recipients as long as grant funds are not designated or used for mentor salary support.

However, individuals from the same institution, department, or practice as a Board Member or Officer are free to apply for grants awarded by ASCO or Conquer Cancer during the same period. A Board Member or Officer may continue to be funded by a grant or award for which he/she was selected before being elected.

A Board Member or Officer may vote on a slate of proposed grant recipients where one or more of the recipients is from his/her institution or practice, provided the Board Member or Officer would not be involved in the grant research. Board Members and Officers who are involved in the grant research in a manner that is not funded by the grant are required to recuse themselves from discussion and voting on all Board and Committee decisions related to those grants.

VII. Leadership Ineligible for ASCO Special Awards

Board Members and Officers are not eligible to receive Special Awards from the time they are elected through the end of the calendar year in which their Board terms conclude. Board Members and Officers are eligible to be designated as Fellows of the American Society of Clinical Oncology when they become eligible, including during their terms of service.

VIII. Leadership Ineligible to Serve on Committees

Given ASCO’s complex range of activities, Board and Committee service carry significant responsibilities and require a substantial time commitment. It is important for the organization to provide volunteer opportunities for as many interested members as possible, and to bring diverse perspectives into the volunteer groups. In view of these considerations, it is ASCO policy that a volunteer may not chair or otherwise serve on a Committee of the Society (including Councils), or as Editor-in-Chief or Associate Editor of an ASCO journal, while he or she is serving as an elected Board Member or Officer, except as a Board liaison or in a formally designated Board seat on the Committee.
If a volunteer is elected to serve as a Board Member or Officer while he or she is a member or Chair-Elect of a Committee of the Society, he or she can serve the remainder of the year as a member or Chair-Elect, but will not become Chair. The volunteer will resign as a member or Chair-Elect upon taking the Board or Officer seat at the Annual Business Meeting. The incoming President will select an alternate Chair or member for Board approval.

If a volunteer is elected to serve as a Board Member or Officer while he or she is Chair of a Committee of the Society, he or she can serve the remainder of the year as Chair. Upon taking the Board or Officer seat at the Annual Business Meeting, he or she will resign from the Committee, and the position of Immediate Past Chair will be vacant for that year.

A volunteer may continue to serve as a chair or member of a Task Force or Steering/Planning Group while simultaneously serving as a Board Member or Officer, so long as the volunteer has the time available to carry out both roles effectively.

If a volunteer is elected to serve as a Board Member or Officer while he or she is Editor-in-Chief or Associate Editor of an ASCO journal, he or she will resign the role upon taking the Board or Officer seat at the Annual Business Meeting unless requested by the Board to remain in place until a successor is in place.

A Board Member or Officer in his or her final year of service may be selected to become Chair-Elect or a member of a Committee of the Society or Editor-in-Chief or Associate Editor of an ASCO Journal at the end of his or her Board/Officer term.

Board Members and Officers do serve as Liaisons to Committees of the Society and as members of Committees of the Board.

Certain ASCO Officers have roles on the Conquer Cancer Board or Board committees. Beyond these prescribed roles, an ASCO Board Member or Officer may serve as a director, officer, or committee member of Conquer Cancer if he or she is comfortable with the time commitment and the dual role.

IX. Leadership Excluded From Ancillary Events with Premium Package (AEPP)

ASCO Board Members and Officers are among the ASCO volunteers excluded from participating in AEPP in any capacity, except as an attendee who receives no honorarium or reimbursement. Restricted activities include but are not limited to serving as an AEPP faculty member, presenter, session chair, consultant or any other role. ASCO does not permit such activities by Board Members and Officers, or by volunteers in other roles designated from time to time by the Board.

X. Questions and Exceptions

Questions about this Implementation Policy should be directed first to ASCO’s Ethics Counsel. Questions requiring further review, and requests for exceptions to this Implementation Policy, will be referred to the Center for Integrity and Law and/or the ASCO Board of Directors, as appropriate. Exceptions will be granted only in rare circumstances and with a convincing demonstration of need and management safeguards.
Application:
Applies to ASCO

History:
Adopted by the ASCO Board of Directors on June 1, 2006