

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, 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 American Academy of Ophthalmology 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 necessary 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 the 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.

2. Disclose to the Academy board or committee or to 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.
3. Refrain from misusing the position as an Academy Leader to solicit, directly or indirectly, commercial opportunities for the Leader in the following ways:
 - 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 out 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.
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 as an Academy Leader, and shall not use any of such information in connection with the Leader's commercial activities or disclose any of such information to any person or organization for any purpose whatsoever.
5. In the case of an Academy Trustee or Secretary only, avoid and refrain from any personal appearance by, or causing or permitting others to refer to, the Academy Trustee or Secretary as an Academy Leader in connection with an exhibit at any Academy meeting that promotes the commercial services or products of the Academy Trustee or Secretary.

Approved by: Board of Trustees, September 1994
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