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Governance

Policy Name	AUGS Volunteer Conflict of Interest Policy: Industry Relationships
Date Approved	June 2024
Updates	

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect the interests of AUGS by: (a) preventing the personal interests of volunteer leaders and staff from influencing their duties to the AUGS, (b) avoiding any inappropriate/undue financial, professional, or political gain on the part of such individuals and (c) avoiding actual, potential or perceived inappropriate/undue influence of outside entities (e.g. industry, pharma, professional organizations) on the operations and management of AUGS. The intent of this policy is to supplement, not replace, any applicable federal, state, or local laws regarding conflicts of interest.

Policy Statement

In order for AUGS to further the educational, scientific and charitable purposes for which it was organized, and to maintain the reputation in which it is held by the public and the urogynecology community, it is important that AUGS decisions and actions not be influenced unduly by any special interests of individual members.

AUGS depends on volunteers to shape the initiatives that provide value to members. Recognizing that many members, including Board members and volunteers, have professional or business relationships with urogynecology industry health care entities it is important to identify actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest which could bias decision making. As such, the AUGS Board of Directors has adopted specific guidelines for key society leaders along with a formal system for identifying, disclosing, and managing potential conflicts of interest.

Duty to Disclose

AUGS Board members, staff, and others holding volunteer leadership positions at AUGS shall disclose all actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interests during their course of service to AUGS in accordance with AUGS Disclosure Policy.

Key Society Leaders

In addition to being required to disclose all actual or potential conflicts of interests with eligible and ineligible entities, AUGS has set the following guidelines and restrictions for key society leaders who have influence on the Society's programs and policies. Please see the appendix for key definitions.

President	<p>During their term of service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not have direct financial relationships with ineligible companies. • May not participate as a spokesperson for an ineligible company through an industry speaker's bureau, advisory board, or otherwise and may not present at educational programs sponsored, funded, managed, or directed by such.
President Elect	<p>During their term of service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not participate as a spokesperson for an ineligible company through an industry speaker's bureau, advisory board, or otherwise and may not present at educational programs sponsored, funded, managed, or directed by such. <p>Additionally, during the last six months of their term of service (July 1 - December 31):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not have direct financial relationships with ineligible companies.
Immediate Past President, Vice President, and Treasurer	<p>During their term of service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not participate as leaders or presenters in a company Industry Expert Theater, Product Theater or promotional/marketing event held in the exhibit hall or associated with AUGS sponsored events.

Members-At-Large, Board of Directors	<p>During their term of service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May not participate as leaders or presenters in a company Industry Expert Theater, Product Theater or promotional/marketing event held in the exhibit hall or associated with AUGS sponsored events.
<i>Urogynecology</i> Journal Editor-in-Chief	<p>During their term of service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May not have direct financial relationships with ineligible companies. ● May not participate as leaders or presenters in a company Industry Expert Theater, Product Theater or promotional/marketing event held in the exhibit hall or associated with AUGS sponsored events.
Publications Committee, Chair & Vice Chair	<p>During their term of service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May not have direct financial relationships with ineligible companies.
Writing Group Chairs & Vice Chairs	<p>During their term of service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May not have direct financial relationships with ineligible companies that are relevant to the topic of the planned publication.
AUGS Annual Meeting (PFD Week) Chair & Vice Chair	<p>During their term of service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May not have direct financial relationships with ineligible companies. ● May not participate as leaders or presenters in a company Industry Expert Theater, Product Theater or promotional/marketing event held in the exhibit hall or associated with AUGS sponsored events.
CME Committee Chair and Vice Chair	<p>During their term of service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May not have direct financial relationships with ineligible companies. ● May not participate as leaders or presenters in a company Industry Expert Theater, Product Theater or promotional/marketing event held in the exhibit hall or associated with AUGS sponsored events.

Appendix of Definitions

The following are definitions and examples for terms that are used throughout this policy.

- **Conflict of Interest:** A conflict of interest may exist when the personal, professional, financial, or other interests of a volunteer leader may influence, or appear to influence, the judgment or conduct of that volunteer leader in a manner that may bias decision making.

- **Direct Financial Relationship:** A relationship between a company and individual that results in direct payment to the individual including wages, consulting fees, honoraria, stock, stock options, or other compensation.

The following are **not** considered direct financial relationships:

- Relationships that do not involve a direct monetary benefit to the individual.
 - Reasonable travel or meal reimbursement in connection with services.
 - Research or training grants, or other advisory/consulting activity, paid to the institution or practice and not to the individual.
 - Independent individual ownership of stock or stock options in a company.
 - Receiving royalties or similar fees relating to patents or other intellectual property.
- **Eligible Companies:** Companies whose primary business is either outside of the urogynecology space, whose products are not used by or on patients, and/or whose sole purpose is medical education (e.g., book and journal publishers, UpToDate, ACGME approved CME, patient education materials etc.).

Any precommercial biomedical and/or pharmaceutical entity in the pre-clinical or clinical design phase of development intended for prescription use is subject to disclosure, review, and a management plan.

- **Ineligible Companies:** Companies whose primary business is producing, marketing, and/or selling urogynecology healthcare products used by or on patients.

Examples include, if in the urogynecology space:

- Device manufacturers or distributors
- Diagnostic labs that sell proprietary products
- Growers, distributors, manufacturers or sellers of medical foods and dietary supplements
- Manufacturers of health-related wearable products
- Pharmaceutical companies or distributors