XI. Conflict of Interest

A. Government Sponsored Research

The University subscribes to and complies with the American Council on Education-American Association of University Professors’ statement, *On Preventing Conflicts of Interest in Government-Sponsored Research at Universities*, contained in Appendix E.

B. Textbook Selection

The Code of Alabama, Section 36-25-5(a), 1995 (The Ethics Act), states "no public official or public employee shall use or caused to be used his or her official position or office to obtain personal gain for himself or herself, or family member of the public employee or family member of the public official, or any business with which the person is associated unless the use and gain are otherwise specifically authorized by law." Amendments to the Alabama Ethics law passed by the 1986 Legislature place faculty of state-supported institutions of higher education within the purview of the conflict of interest standards set forth in the law. Advisory Opinion No. 1130 issued by the Alabama Ethics Commission on August 21, 1987, concluded that a faculty member "...who is also an author is not permitted to make the decision as to whether his or her publication will be used." The opinion approved a process where "...the decision is made by either administrative officials of the institution or a textbook committee composed of other faculty members and administrative officials with the institution."

Each academic department or division is expected to have a textbook selection committee. In cases where a faculty member desires to use textbook(s), laboratory manuals, computer software, or other instructional materials from which the faculty member, or any person or business associated with the faculty member's family obtains direct financial gain, the faculty member shall submit this recommendation to the textbook selection committee at least three months prior to the beginning date of the semester in which the course(s) will be taught. The textbook selection committee is responsible for reviewing the recommendation, considering the appropriateness of the textbook(s) or other materials for the course, considering alternative textbooks or materials, and informing the faculty member and department head or dean of their decision. Whenever possible, decisions should be made at least three months in advance of the beginning date of the semester in which the course will be offered. Decisions on selection of textbooks or other materials authored by a faculty member, or from which the faculty member receives royalties, are effective for all semesters beginning in the subsequent 12 months, if the faculty member elects to continue using the textbook(s) or materials.

*(For more information, please refer to The University of Alabama Faculty Handbook - Chapter 3)*