

Guidelines Regarding Close Personal Relations Between Senior University Administrators

The University of Toronto is a large community with some 12,000 employed faculty and staff and several thousands more with related appointments in federated and affiliated institutions. There will be occasions where individuals who are related or have close personal relations are appointed to senior administrative¹ roles. Such circumstances will likely increase given the focus on spousal/partner hiring in recent years. These guidelines supplement the [*Conflict of Interest and Close Personal Relations Protocols for Chairs and Academic Administrators*](#) by focusing on issues involving those in senior administrative roles.

For purposes of this document close personal relations include spouses, partners and family members. The guiding principles are disclosure, identification of conflicts, and separation of interests.

Disclosure

Where individuals who have close personal relations are appointed to, or are proposed for appointment to, senior administrative positions there must be disclosure of the relationship to each individual's one-up or primary report. The supervisors of these individuals should discuss whether there is potential for real or perceived conflict of interest. Where appropriate, the supervisors should consult with the relevant Vice-President(s) and/or President.

Identification of potential areas of conflict

There are a number of areas where possible conflicts may be identified such as (but not limited to):

(1) **The appointment decision** – It is a breach of the University Conflict of Interest policies² for an individual with a close personal relation to participate in discussion of, recommend, or decide on the appointment of a close personal relation to any position at the University.

(2) **Participation in compensation and performance assessment decisions** – Similarly, it is a breach of policy for such individuals to participate in initial or subsequent compensation and performance assessment decisions for the setting of an individual's personal compensation. There will be circumstances where an individual participates in the development of compensation and performance assessment programs for groups to which the close personal relation belongs. In such circumstances there should be regular review of the decisions by the one-up report and clear documentation of the separation of interests with respect to the individual compensation decisions.

¹ For the purposes of this document, 'senior administrator is defined as follows: a member of PDAD&C; a Vice-President; a Professional Managerial (PM) staff in level 6 or above.

² Includes, but is not limited to, *Policy on Conflict of Interest – Academic Staff*, *Policies for Professionals/Managers (Policy on Conflict of Interest)*, and *Statement on Conflict of Interest and Conflict*

(3) **Consideration of matters brought forward** – Items will come forward from an individual where there is need for review, recommendation or decision by an individual with whom there is a close personal relation. In such situations, the input or decision should have one-up review.

(4) **Confidentiality of matters under consideration** – All members of the University community are expected to respect confidentiality and privacy requirements under University policies and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Conclusion

Given the principles outlined above it will normally not be possible for an individual who exercises line responsibility with budgetary and staff supervision responsibility in a unit to hold such a position where the one-up report, or that individual's one-up report, is a close personal relation. Exceptions for such a situation would require approval of the President and reporting to the Senior Appointments and Compensation Committee of Governing Council.

In applying these guidelines University officers must exercise good judgment and prudence. When in doubt, officers should follow a precautionary principle and discuss the issue with the individual to whom they primarily report in an administrative capacity.

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