

AIAA Member Conflict of Interest

Preamble

Each individual acting for or in the name of AIAA is in a position of trust. Particularly since AIAA holds as paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the general public, each such individual has fundamental responsibility to exercise impartial professional judgment to enhance the practice of aerospace engineering in the public interest. This Institute Policy is intended to further assure the objectivity and public confidence in the integrity of all Institute deliberations and statements, by establishing guidelines and procedures concerning conflicts of interest. It is acknowledged and understood that competent and knowledgeable individuals of recognized abilities, qualifications and interest who participate in professional activities may have potential conflicts of interest. This Institute Policy establishes guidelines and procedures to enable such individuals to act ethically and to uphold the integrity of the Institute's policies, rules, codes and standards.

Policy

The potential for a conflict of interest exists whenever a person owes a loyalty to multiple interests or organizations. Having different interests or loyalties does not constitute a conflict of interest when the action desired by each interest is the same. This situation may be described as a community of interest.

A conflict of interest occurs only when loyalty to one interest would impel a course of action different from that impelled by another interest. For example, while acting for or on behalf of the Institute, a volunteer may consider a matter which directly affects the specific rather than the collective interests of the individual's employer or a competitor of the employer. In such instances, there could be a conflict of interest between exercise of the volunteer's independent professional judgment on behalf of AIAA and the public and the individual's loyalties and responsibilities to his or her employer or another entity.

In many AIAA standards-writing committees and other committees, the procedures for appointment provide for a balanced or diversified representation among the various categories of interest within the scope of that committee's concern. This "balance of interest" minimizes the instances of appearance of conflict of interest by preventing situations in which a single interest group could control the action on an issue. Accordingly, where general categories of interest were considered in appointing a balanced committee or other group, an individual's identification with the particular interest shall not be grounds for raising an issue of the appearance of a conflict of interest. This is particularly so because the removal of one or more individuals representing a particular category of interest on conflict of interest grounds could upset the planned balance of economical and technical interests.

It is nevertheless the duty of volunteers acting for or on behalf of the Institute to be aware of the possibility of a conflict of interest between their responsibilities to AIAA and the public on the one hand and to their employer or another entity on the other. All volunteers have a fundamental responsibility to refrain from participating in Institute decision-making when a competing interest precludes or inhibits the exercise of the volunteer's independent professional judgment on behalf of AIAA, or when the nature of the competing interest is such that the volunteer's continued participation would unreasonably jeopardize the integrity of the decision-making process.

Responsibilities

Individual Responsibilities

In instances where it is clear to individual volunteers that their judgment with respect to a matter pending before AIAA is controlled by their loyalty to a competing interest, they should disqualify themselves and refrain from participating in the deliberations and decision-making regarding the conflict-affected matter.

This does not preclude their attendance and participation at any meeting of a committee or other body on the same basis as any non-member of the committee or other body.

In instances where individual volunteers believe that there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest, although they believe that their independent judgment will not be affected by a competing interest, the

volunteers should nevertheless avail themselves of at least one of the following consultative courses of action:

- 1) If an individual is serving on a board, committee, subcommittee, section, council or other decision-making body, the individual should make certain that all concerned with the projected deliberations or decision-making clearly understand the facts and circumstances involved in this possible conflict situation. Following due consideration of the circumstances involved, unless a three-fourths majority concurs by secret ballot that the continued participation will not unreasonably jeopardize the integrity of the decision-making process, the individual shall refrain from participation in deliberations not open to non-members and decision-making regarding the conflict-affected matter. Such disqualification considerations may be either referred or appealed, (in the first instance, to the appointing committee or supervisory body, if any, and then (if unresolved) to the conflict of interest oversight body designated by the Board of Directors by the chair of the committee, subcommittee or other body, the individual volunteer or any other participant in the potential conflict of interest consideration.
- 2) If the individual is acting for or on behalf of AIAA other than in a committee or group participation capacity, or if an individual serving on a committee or group wishes to bypass this step, the individual should bring the potential conflict of interest matter directly to the attention, in the first instance, of the appointing committee or supervisory body, if any, and then (if unresolved) to the attention of the conflict of interest oversight body.

Challenges by Other Members

Any member of a board, committee, subcommittee, section or other decision-making body who believes that the continued participation of any other member of that body may unreasonably jeopardize the integrity of the decision-making process may (and should) challenge that member. The Challenge should first be raised with the Chair of the particular body of interest. Should the Challenge not be resolved to the satisfaction of the challenger, the Challenge should be submitted in writing to the Chair of the AIAA Ethical Conduct Panel.

Implementation

The provisions of this Institute Policy are applicable to the members of boards, standing and technical committees, sections, subcommittees, other decision-making bodies and individuals acting for or on behalf of AIAA. Individuals participating as volunteers in AIAA activities have the primary responsibility for assuring their adherence to this Institute Policy.

Nonetheless, given the sensitive nature of these considerations and the interest of the Institute in preserving the integrity of its reputation and processes, AIAA retains responsibility for oversight in this area. Accordingly, the Board of Directors hereby assigns oversight responsibility for this Institute Policy to the AIAA Ethical Conduct Panel. The Ethical Conduct Panel shall have authority to review questions of conflicts of interest and to render opinions thereon. The Ethical Conduct Panel may authorize the Chair of the Ethical Conduct Panel to issue a letter of warning or admonishment to persons who violate this policy or request that the Chair refer the matter to the AIAA President for processing as an ethics complaint. A decision of the Ethical Conduct Panel shall be binding and final if a letter of warning or admonishment is the course of action.

AIAA Staff

Individuals who are employees of AIAA have specific responsibilities that are somewhat different in scope from the provisions of this member policy. These responsibilities are described in detail in the separate staff policy maintained by AIAA Human Resources department. All AIAA employees are required to read, acknowledge, and adhere to the employee Conflict of Interest policy.

Notice

Each time an individual is elected or appointed to an AIAA leadership position, the individual shall at the time of election or appointment be sent a copy of this Institute Policy and of the AIAA Code of Ethics and should be advised to adhere to the provisions of these policies as a condition of acting for or representing the Institute. It is the duty of all AIAA leaders to provide this Notice to those serving in leadership capacities under their areas of responsibilities.

Acceptance

Before taking office, unless there is in AIAA's files a prior signed acceptance of the Institute Conflict of Interest Policy, each member in a leadership position listed in appendix 1, shall state in writing adherence to the conditions of this Institute Policy. If this signed Statement is not on file, the member may not take office.

Note that when this Policy receives substantive revision as determined by the Board of Directors, all persons required to have a Conflict of Interest Statement on file shall receive a copy of the revised Policy and shall be requested to sign a new Conflict of Interest Statement.

Oversight

At least once a year, the President of AIAA shall submit a report to the Ethical Conduct Panel certifying that the notification and acceptance requirements of this policy have been met, and shall include names of those not in compliance. The process for accomplishing this should involve the President certifying that the Board of Directors is in compliance.

Should there be any occurrence where a member does not sign a Conflict of Interest Statement and forward it to the Institute within 90 days, the President shall inform the pertinent board, committee, section or other body requiring the execution of a Conflict of Interest Statement that the member is in violation of the Conflict of Interest Policy and may not continue in office or further represent AIAA.

When action is taken by a member to comply with this Policy, that individual will be reinstated to their position and allowed to represent AIAA in their previous position.

Responsibility: Board of Directors / Ethical Conduct Panel

Adopted: 12 January 2007

Revised: 16 May 2007

Appendix 1

The following AIAA leaders are required to have submitted a signed Conflict of Interest Statement form within 90 days of taking office:

- President-Elect
- President
- Past President
- VP-Elect Finance
- VP Finance
- VP-Elect Publications
- VP Publications
- VP-Elect Standards
- VP Standards
- VP-Elect International Activities
- VP International Activities
- VP-Elect Education
- VP Education
- VP-Elect Technical Activities
- VP Technical Activities
- VP-Elect Public Policy
- VP Public Policy
- VP-Elect Member Services
- VP Member Services
- Director at Large
- Director at Large
- Director at Large
- Director International
- Director International
- Director International
- Director Technical - Propulsion and Energy Group
- Director Technical - Aircraft and Air Transportation Systems
- Director Technical - Information Systems
- Director Technical - Engineering and Technology Management
- Director Technical - Aerospace Sciences Group
- Director Technical - Space and Missiles
- Director Technical - Structures Design and Test
- Director Region 1
- Director Region 2
- Director Region 3
- Director Region 4
- Director Region 5
- Director Region 6
- Director Region 7