

## **ACNP Financial Disclosure & Conflict of Interest Firewalls**

The core purpose of the ACNP is to advance scientific understanding of and to facilitate communication about disorders of the brain and behavior in order to further their prevention and treatment. The ACNP has historically provided a venue at which the best scientists from academia, government, and industry have gathered to share, discuss, and debate their research. The meeting has served as a catalyst to advance discovery and disseminate information about scientific advances.

Like most professional medical societies, funding for the ACNP comes from a variety of sources including membership dues, royalties from publication sales, meeting registration fees, and grants from corporations or governmental agencies. The College has developed policies and procedures to either eliminate or to properly manage both real and perceived conflicts of interest, and to separate financial issues from operational decisions. We have established firewalls to protect the integrity of College operations and to prevent the influence of financial sponsors from penetrating decision making processes of the College. Some of these measures are:

### **General:**

1. Companies must apply to ACNP for supporting corporation status. In this application the company must summarize their original research in the CNS area and they must demonstrate their interest in and commitment to the mission of the College.
2. Supporting corporation status within the College does not entitle a company to vote on ACNP official business. In fact, companies are not allowed to attend meetings in which official business is conducted, e.g. Council meetings, member business meetings, Program Committee meetings, Publications meetings, etc.
3. Companies, or their representatives, are not appointed to ACNP committees, although they are sometimes asked to serve as ad hoc members without voting privileges on certain task forces or committees on which they could make an important contribution.
4. Grants from companies must be unencumbered of obligation to the sponsor, support legitimate scientific or educational purposes, be based on objective criteria, and must not represent payment for influence or favorable treatment.
5. Grants are only accepted by the College in support of programs such as educational programs or research fellowships that are designed to be of benefit to the field and are independently managed by members of the College.
6. The ACNP Executive Office staff handles all financial matters with supporting corporations, i.e. collecting fees and making grant requests. Staff members have no vote on any official ACNP program activities. The ACNP members who participate in those official College activities are not involved in financial matters and usually are not aware of the financial contributions that may or may not have been made by any company.

7. Member employees of supporting corporations must not participate in scientific discussions unless they believe they can offer objective and independent information and they must fully disclose their potential conflict of interest.
8. All members of key ACNP bodies such as Council, Program Committee, and Ethics Committee are required to fully disclose all potential conflicts of interest at least annually. Further, before each meeting of these bodies specific members and officers of the College are charged with the responsibility to monitor for conflict and to make sure that anyone with a conflict of interest relevant to a particular discussion has disclosed that COI and if necessary, has been recused from the discussion.

#### Annual Meeting:

1. All supporting corporations are treated the same. Each is offered the same opportunity to support the meeting and they are acknowledged and recognized based on the amount of support provided. No specific sessions are identified as having been sponsored by a certain company. No support is accepted from any company that has not been approved by ACNP Council as a supporting corporation.
2. No supporting corporation is allowed to attend the program committee meeting during which the program for the annual meeting is determined.
3. No exhibits are allowed at the meeting, nor are any advertisements allowed in meeting materials.
4. Supporting corporations are not allowed to sponsor social activities or other events that take meeting attendees away from the meeting site.
5. Supporting corporations are allowed only a limited number of representatives to attend the meeting, and the vast majority of those (at least 80%) must be MD/PhD level staff (i.e. scientists) rather than marketing or administrative staff.
6. The activities of supporting corporations at the Annual Meeting are monitored by asking all meeting attendees to report on the meeting evaluation any activity that they believed to be inappropriate.

#### Publications:

1. The ACNP does not accept advertising in any of its print or electronic publications.
2. Editors and Associate Editors of ACNP books, journals, and electronic web sites must disclose to the Chair of the Publications Committee the names of organizations, institutions, companies and individuals (including intermediaries such as sub-contractors or conference organizers) from which they have received annual compensation for professional services in excess of \$10,000 in any of the previous three years.

3. Professional services include any activities for which the individual is or has been compensated with cash, royalties or fees, promised future royalties or fees, or stock or stock options in exchange for work performed, advice or counsel provided, or for other services related to the Editor's or Associate Editor's professional knowledge and skills.
4. Editors and Associate Editors of College publications must submit this information to the Chair of the Publications Committee prior to appointment and must update the list on an annual basis, or more frequently if necessary.
5. The information provided is used to make judgments about potential conflicts of interest, to assess whether the number and extent of potential conflicts significantly compromises the individual's ability to perform the tasks required of an editor or associate editor of an ACNP publication, and to appropriately manage potential conflicts of interest by recusing the editor from any matters in which he/she may have a conflict.
6. An accusation that an Editor or Associate Editor has violated the conflict of interest policy shall be referred to the ACNP Ethics Committee for consideration and investigation. The Ethics Committee shall report its findings and recommendations to the Publications Committee and Council for action.
7. An Editor or Associate Editor found guilty of violating the conflict of interest policy is subject to sanction, up to and including forfeiture of the editorship.