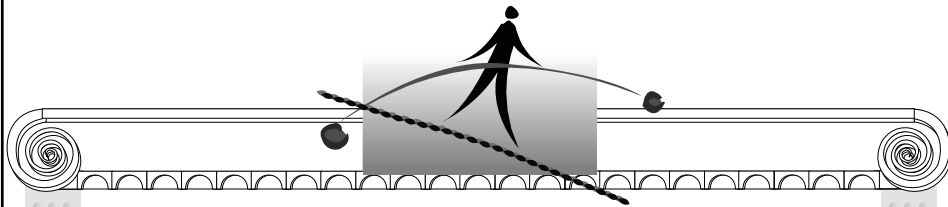


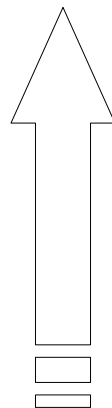
Ethics Review



*Office of General Counsel
The Texas A&M University System*

Evolving Ethics

Laws
Customs
Standards
Values



Texas Ethics

- State Laws
- Texas Ethics Commission



TAMUS Ethics

- TAMUS Policies:
07.01, SPRM
- Travel, fiscal, etc.
policies

Principles of Ethical Conduct

- ➔ 1. TAMUS Employees shall not hold financial interests that are in conflict with the conscientious performance of their official duties and responsibilities.
- ➔ 2. TAMUS Employees shall not engage in any financial transaction in order to further any private interest using non-public information which they obtain in the course of their employment.
- ➔ 3. TAMUS Employees shall put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties.
- ➔ 4. TAMUS Employees shall make no unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind TAMUS or any of its components.

Principles of Ethical Conduct

- ➔ 5. TAMUS Employees shall not use their public offices for private gain.
- ➔ 6. TAMUS Employees shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private or public organization or individual.
- ➔ 7. TAMUS Employees shall protect and conserve public property and shall not use it for other than authorized activities.
- ➔ 8. TAMUS Employees shall not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with official duties and responsibilities.

Principles of Ethical Conduct

- ➔ 9. TAMUS Employees shall promptly disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to appropriate authorities.
- ➔ 10. TAMUS Employees shall adhere to all laws, regulations, and policies that provide equal opportunity for all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability.
- ➔ 11. TAMUS Employees shall endeavor to avoid any actions that would create the appearance that they are violating the law or the ethical standards of TAMUS

Where do Ethics questions come up ?

- ➔ Travel
- ➔ Entertainment
- ➔ Gifts
- ➔ Political activities
- ➔ Honoraria
- ➔ Vehicles

Before you do it, ask yourself some questions

How would this look to my harshest critic?

*How would it look on the front page of the
newspaper?*

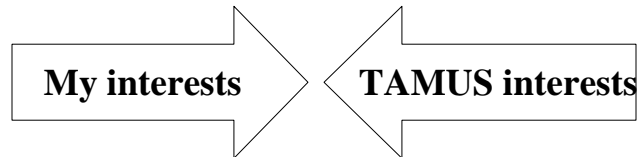


*If there is a doubt in my mind that I can accept
it, would there also be doubt in the minds of
the taxpayers?*

Recipe for a Conflict of Interest

- Decisions, actions, or something else I do as part of my job
- I have a personal interest in the outcome
- The State, TAMUS, and/or my component have an interest in the outcome too.

Avoiding Conflicts



Best way to avoid conflict problems:

DISCLOSURE

Surprise!

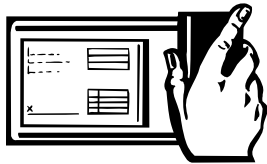
- Work-related trip
- State vehicle
- Filed voucher for hotel and meals
- Surprise! Check for travel expenses arrives from third party!
- Deposit reimbursement check AND surprise check in your account



Surprise! Part 2

- What have you done?
 - Double-dipping
 - Used state property for personal gain
- What should you have done?
 - Return the check to the company
 - Notify your supervisor re what happened and what you did to return the check

Give me some credit



- “Ahh, the Galleria!”
- “What a buy!”
- “Shucks. I left home without it.”
- State credit card to the rescue, right?
- **WRONG!!!**

State vehicles



- Read the policies! It's easier than having to explain why you didn't!
- Never use for political purposes
- Personal use only as absolutely necessary

More on vehicles

- No family members
- No non-state business passengers
- Exception: meals and lodging while on state business
- Common sense helps
 - Perceptions become reality to taxpayers
 - State car parked front of X-rated video store

Beware of Bribery!!



- An agreement between you and someone else
- To do or refrain from doing something
- Part of your official duties
- *In exchange for something*

Where do potential bribery problems lurk?

- Purchasing
- Admissions
- Hiring
- Promotions
- Etc., etc., etc.



Gifts and Benefits

- If you are a decision-maker and the donor will benefit from your decision
- If your agency regulates the donor
- If you know the donor is in a lawsuit against your component
- ***JUST SAY “NO!!”***

There are always exceptions

- Meals, entertainment, lodging, or transportation **BUT YOU MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE DONOR OR A REPRESENTATIVE**
 - Remember: If the host isn't there, beware!
- Items having a value under \$50
 - It's OK to ask how much it's worth
 - T-shirts, caps, pens, mugs, etc.

You can give it away



- You may accept an unsolicited gift that normally would not qualify if you give it to a charity
- Food gifts, flowers, etc. are best shared with others in your office if possible

It is OK to accept

- Gifts from family members, friends, etc.
- Gifts based on personal business relationship (doctor, accountant, realtor)
- Plaques, recognition awards from employer



What should you do?

- You get a pair of football tickets in the mail from the copier salesman
- You are offered a free round trip ticket for your personal use for every 10,000 miles of air travel you book for your department through a certain travel agent
- Wal-Mart announces a special discount for all employees of your component

What if . . .

- You attend a conference on state time for official business, and win a door prize!!



“New York, New York”

- Contract between the computer company and your department
- You have the last word
- Headed to the Big Apple
- Broadway!!

What about an honorarium?

- An item or payment made to you for performing a service
- Not on a regular basis
- Examples
 - Give a lecture
 - Write a paper
- Why were YOU asked to do it?
 - Because of what you know? OR
 - Because of who you are?
- **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT!!**

“They like me! They really like me!” (or maybe they like my title)

- Because of my knowledge, expertise, etc.
 - OK to accept honorarium
- Because of my office, title, position
 - NO!! (But it is OK to accept food, lodging and transportation)
- Get it in writing to protect yourself

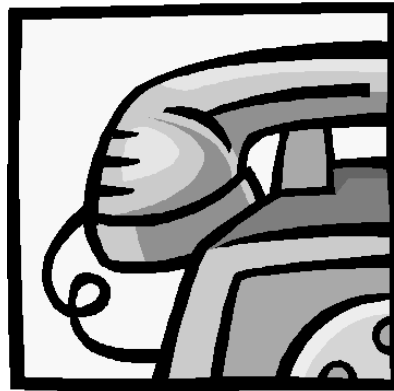


Property and Equipment

- It's pretty simple: it belongs to the State
- Incidental personal use is permitted
 - Infrequent, occasional
 - Does not incur additional expense
 - When in doubt: ASK!!!

Examples

- Office phones
- Computers
- Cell phones BUT with some qualifiers!!!
- Use must be INCIDENTAL to your job for TAMUS
- Know your own rules!!



So, who cares about ethics?

We all do.

And so do the people who pay our salaries,

And trust us with their money,

their children,

And the future.