



Association of American Universities

October 9, 2001

Dear Colleagues:

The AAU Task Force on Research Accountability has just completed its report on individual and institutional conflict of interest. The report is intended to identify ways in which presidents and chancellors can help ensure the integrity of their institutions, and thereby bolster the public's confidence in research universities.

The Task Force defined both *individual* and *institutional* conflict of interest, and concluded that the problem is rarely a particular conflict itself -- rather it is the question about what is done with the conflict. With individual conflict of interest, the Task Force focused on improving existing management systems and regulatory compliance, and with institutional conflict, focused on developing policies and principles, since no regulations guide this area.

The Task Force therefore urges your prompt attention to reviewing, and where necessary, strengthening your institution's conflict of interest policies and management using the *individual* conflict of interest Operating Guidelines in Section II, and the three-fold approach for managing *institutional* conflict of interest described in Section III. This will help ensure that the integrity of our research universities can be maintained, and that the confidence of the public we serve can continue to be deserved.

Sincerely,

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