

**Mount Saint Vincent University  
Board of Governors  
Conflict of Interest Policy**

**Policy Statement**

The Board of Governors of Mount Saint Vincent University expects its members and committee members (including those who are not Board members) to conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner. Mount Saint Vincent University further expects that, in the context of their positions, members of the Board and committees will make decisions in the best interests of Mount Saint Vincent University. Any financial, personal or other transaction which would cause, or be perceived as, a conflict with the interests and purpose of Mount Saint Vincent University, or which would impair, or appear to impair, a member's integrity or objectivity in relation to their position, must be avoided.

Consideration will be given to the tenets of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility as they relate to the implementation and promotion of the Board of Governors Conflict of Interest Policy and its associated guidelines.

**Rationale**

Board members of the University are likely to have many affiliations in their communities, both on a professional, business, and a personal basis, so it is not unusual for actual or potential conflicts of interest to arise. Board service carries with it important ethical obligations. Universities serve the broad public good, and when Board members fail to exercise reasonable care in their oversight of the University, they are not living up to their public trust. In addition, Board members have a legal responsibility to assure the prudent management of the University's resources.

The following may be considered examples of conflicts of interest:

- I. When the personal or professional concerns of a Board member affect their ability to put the welfare of the University before personal benefit.
- II. When a member of the Board accepts gifts, gratuities, or favours from a firm or corporation engaged in or wishing to engage in transactions with the University, except in the case of customary gifts of a purely nominal value.
- III. When a member of the Board or a member of their family (parents, spouse and children) has a direct or indirect financial interest in any matter under consideration by the Board or in any contract or proposed contract to be entered into by the University.
- IV. When a member of the Board is also a member of an on-campus union, and labour relations between the Board and on-campus unions are being discussed.

**Process**

The following shall apply when considering situations of real or apparent conflicts of interest:

- I. It is the responsibility of each member of the Board or committee to disclose potential conflicts of interest as soon as possible. A perceived, potential or actual conflict of interest shall be brought to the attention of the Chair by any member of the Board or by a member of a committee.

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- II. Board and committee Chairs who anticipate a real or perceived conflict of interest to arise during meetings should contact the person affected by the conflict as soon as possible prior to the meeting, clearly stating what the potential conflict may be.
- III. A member of the Board or committee who has an actual or potential conflict of interest shall not participate in the decision-making process except to clarify facts if requested to do so by the Chair.
- IV. The member may be asked by the Chair of the meeting or may offer to withdraw from the room while the decision is being made.
- V. The Chair will rule in the case of a perceived conflict of interest.

This policy statement shall be made available to all Board and committee members as part of the Acknowledgement and Agreement (A&A) document process. Board members shall acknowledge receipt of, and compliance with, this policy by signing the A&A document; signed copies of the A&A document will be held in a file retained by the University Governance Secretary.

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