

## **Policy on Relations with Corporate Sponsors and Vendors**

### **College of Veterinary Medicine, Cornell University**

**Last revised: October 8, 2024**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this policy is to outline an ethical framework and organizational structure for formal relationships between the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine (including faculty, house officers, technical and administrative staff, and students) and commercial interests, including health related companies and other businesses, as well as non-profit organizations desiring interactions with animal health educators and students. The College recognizes the value to post-graduate trainees, students and faculty who participate in these interactions, and the importance to our educational, outreach, and research missions of the expertise and resources contributed by external partnerships and collaborations. University Policy 4.6, Standards of Ethical Conduct and Policy 4.14, Conflicts of Interest and Commitment apply to all personnel and units of the university. The intent of this college policy is to establish guidelines and oversight of these relationships in scenarios not currently covered by University policy.

#### **A. Corporate Donations- The college reserves the right to negotiate gifts, discounts and other arrangements with external organizations that serve the college's strategic goals.**

- Charitable Gifts from companies, other organizations, and individuals may be made to the College to support educational activities or programs, social events or student activities, fundraising activities such as the SAVMA Auction, or outreach programs, consistent with the gift policies of Cornell University. All decisions regarding the content of supported programs are the responsibility of the College. Programmatic financial support, and any personal financial relationships of speakers with companies whose products are represented, must be fully disclosed by the College in event announcements and similar communications.
- Charitable Gifts may be made to support research programs. Such gifts, as well as sponsored grants and contracts, are subject to [standard university gift and research policies](#).
- Supplies or equipment may be donated or provided to the College by healthcare vendors for general educational, diagnostic, or clinical use. All such gifts will be managed centrally by the Hospital Director, Section Head, Pharmacist, AHDC Executive Director, or other appropriate College designee. The use of such gifts cannot solely benefit employees or individual students. For permanent equipment, this would be considered gifts-in-kind, and the Alumni Affairs & Development office would need to be involved to process as philanthropy. The determination of the use of specific products in any educational or clinical setting is the sole responsibility of the College. It will be the policy of the College to manage such donations or discounts in a manner in which the choice of an individual product is not influenced by the gift or discount, such as through the negotiation of equivalent relationships with multiple vendors and/or sponsored events that allow a comparison of similar products. Company representatives may provide technical details of their products to individual clinicians, or small groups of clinicians, regardless of whether the

product is made available to the college at a discount. University policy governs who can accept gifts. The use of these gifts is not at the discretion of individual faculty members or house officers. In certain instances, this authority is delegated to program leaders.

## **B. Food Policy**

Faculty, staff, and students may participate in sponsored meals or banquets at professional meetings and scientific conferences which are broadly available to participants, at comparative presentations of multiple products hosted by the College, or as part of an honorific event or celebration. Faculty and staff may not accept direct personal gifts of food and meals provided by industry representatives in situations intended to influence purchasing decisions. Additional details appear in the following sections.

## **C. Extra-Curricular Educational and Informational Events for Students**

Numerous educational and informational events outside of the formal teaching program are held at the College of Veterinary Medicine. These programs add richness and practical value to our teaching program, and it is the intent of the College to preserve these valuable student/industry interactions in a way that eliminates real or perceived conflicts of interest. All informational events held at the College in which commercial product information is presented to students must be registered and scheduled in the Office of Student and Academic Services. Approved events can be advertised within the school to attract participation.

### **1. Student organization events featuring a limited number of speakers sponsored by a single company (excluding nonprofit entities)**

Donations are made to the College of Veterinary Medicine and will be restricted for use for student educational activities and community building. These activities and donations require the approval of the Office of Student and Academic Services. For veterinary student activities, such gifts will be directed to a College DVM Student Activities Account that will be overseen by the Office of Student and Academic Services.

The choice of activity or individual speakers are made by the individual clubs in the case of club sponsored events, or by the appropriate college representatives organizing larger events intended for a broader audience. Decisions regarding presentations sponsored by funds from SAVMA programs or dues will be made by SAVMA. Allocated funds from the Student Activities Account may be requested by student organizations to cover the costs of food for academic presentations unrelated to specific commercial products, club activities, and any costs associated with materials and/or the use of the College facilities.

Registered student organizations receiving funds from their national chapter may deposit those funds directly into their club accounts. These funds may be used for any club activity, including the purchase of food. An acknowledgement of all the donors to the Student Activities fund will be displayed at any event supported through the Student Activities Fund.

## **2. Student organization events including multiple speakers open to sponsorship by multiple companies (E.g. Open House, symposia, etc.)**

These activities must still be registered and approved by the Office of Student and Academic Services, but donations can be made directly to the organization coordinating the event, following the same guidelines specified below for continuing education events. An acknowledgement of the donations from all vendors, such as a banner with the names or logos of all donors, may be displayed at all events, in a manner consistent with the policies and practice of Continuing Education events (see Section E. Item 8, below).

## **3. Activities sponsored by a non-profit (501(c)(3) organization**

These activities, which serve educational purposes and promote awareness of veterinary organizations must be scheduled through the Office of Student and Academic Services or appropriate student office and may include direct support for speakers and meals.

### **D. Recruitment Events**

Official recruitment events at the college coordinated by the college may include food, drink, activities and presentations sponsored by outside entities, as negotiated and approved by the college administration. Registration fees may be charged to participating practices and companies to cover expenses associated with event coordination. Participating recruiters are free to provide informational and promotional materials to prospective recruits. The college reserves the right to approve or disapprove of participating external organizations. This policy does not extend to industry recruitment and student job search activities coordinated outside the purview of the college.

### **E. Student Representatives**

Students have traditionally been employed by commercial interests with the intent of increasing the exposure of their products to veterinary students. The purpose of this policy is to manage this exposure and provide a consistent and appropriate context for this valuable information. While the College discourages the hiring of individual students to represent external commercial interests, it is acknowledged that some graduates may choose to pursue careers in industry for which this experience may be valuable, the College cannot proscribe students from accepting external employment, and that students play an important role in facilitating the scheduling and organization of presentations that add valuable professional information and adhere to College guidelines. Therefore:

1. Commercial interests may employ student representatives. All student representatives must register with the Office of Student and Academic Services. A standard form will be provided that discloses the extent of activities expected and the degree of compensation provided.

2. Students are not permitted to directly market any commercial products to other students, staff, or faculty on University property or using University resources. The direct dissemination of product materials to students in College mailboxes, College bulletin boards, or through the University email system is prohibited.

## **F. Curriculum Materials**

The veterinary curriculum is enriched by the participation of external professionals, including those associated with corporate interests. It is the goal of the curriculum policy to manage any real or potential conflicts through transparency, and to enhance the education of Cornell Veterinary students in the area of professional ethics, critical thinking, and appropriate disclosure policies.

1. Course syllabi will disclose any donations to, or other sponsorship of, a course within the veterinary curriculum (e.g. product donations, speakers, course materials, etc.). Course syllabi will be submitted to the Curriculum Committee as part of periodic course reviews.

2. Presentations by external speakers or industry representatives in the CUCVM curriculum are included at the discretion of the course leader(s) in an effort to enhance the curriculum. Presenters must have professional qualifications appropriate for the material they are covering; presentations must support legitimate educational objectives; and, such presentations should not substitute for available and qualified university personnel. Sponsorship and the affiliation of outside presenters should be clearly identified in the introduction to the presentation. Course materials and presentations should be appropriate for an academic presentation and contain evidence-based product descriptions.

3. Sponsorship of course materials supplied by external organizations (handouts, guides, visual presentations, software, devices) should be clearly acknowledged on these materials.

4. Faculty members who have financial interest in products/services about which they lecture are required to disclose this at the start of the lecture.

5. Students will be made aware of college policies on corporate sponsorship during orientation and be referred to the relevant guidelines in the student handbook.

## **F. Continuing Education**

The Continuing Education Office of the College seeks corporate sponsorship to help defray conference expenses for veterinarians and licensed veterinary technicians, and to increase the quality and attraction of the event. Attendance by exhibitors adds value to the conference by making veterinarians aware of new products and services, and corporate sponsorship. The primary purpose of for-profit corporations in sponsoring events is assumed to be a means of assuring speaker quality, good conference attendance and satisfaction in order to meet marketing goals (name and product recognition, and enhanced business relationships with practitioners and veterinary staff).

1. Conference, laboratory or seminar content, and presenter selection will be at the sole discretion of the program committee or organizing faculty member.
2. Speaker and laboratory presentations shall be based on evidence-based, scientific analysis. Products, services and equipment should be discussed as generic whenever possible.
3. Presentation of a new or unique product in a lecture or laboratory will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Associate Dean for Education or their designee in collaboration with the organizing faculty member.
4. Vendor- or sponsor-supplied materials must be acknowledged if included in a speaker's presentation or laboratory.
5. All presenters are required to complete a disclosure statement of financial support and to show a disclosure slide at the beginning of their presentation with any financial interest or relationships relevant to the presentation. If no financial support has been received, notation on the title slide of "no financial interest or relationship relevant to the presentation" is sufficient.
6. All speaker payments will be made by the College (or partner organization such as NYSVMS).
7. Corporate support of continuing education events sponsored by the College will be accepted in three main categories: i) unrestricted funds to support speaker and other educational costs, which may include support of theme-based speaker tracks (e.g. dentistry, ultrasound, emergency medicine); ii) donation of supplies and equipment to vendor-supported laboratories; and iii) support for other conference non-educational activities such as social events in which greater corporate specific marketing will be possible. It will be the policy of the College to manage product or equipment donations in a manner in which the choice of an individual product is not influenced by the gift or discount, such as through the negotiation of equivalent relationships with multiple vendors and/or sponsored events that allow a comparison of similar products.
8. Recognition of unrestricted gifts to support educational programming and equipment/supply donations typically will be limited to listing of sponsors in conference publications, conference and college websites, and other advertisements. Sponsors of non-educational activities can be recognized more directly as part of the event at the discretion of the program committee.
9. Corporate logos on conference publications, advertising, and in conference handouts are acceptable, but the size and layout of logos and acknowledgements are the decision of the College (and partner non-profit 501 (c)(3) or 501 (c)(6) organizations).
10. Product advertisements will not be allowed in or at the entrances to lecture halls or laboratory spaces.
11. Corporate contracting of facilities, animals and personnel for non-college sponsored educational events will be considered on a for-fee, case-by-case basis by the college administration. The college will expect the contracting sponsor to be qualified as a NYS State Education Department (SED) and/or RACE approved CE sponsor without college oversight or involvement in the credit- granting process.

**G. Policy Oversight**

Student compliance with these guidelines is intended to be governed by the applicable student services office codes of academic conduct.

Faculty and Staff compliance is the responsibility of appropriate supervisors.