

THE UNITARIAN CHURCH IN WESTPORT CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

A Conflict of Interest is any actual or potential situation in which an individual's close relationship to another party would make it difficult for the individual to be unbiased in carrying out his or her obligations.

In our congregation, occasional conflicts of interest are inevitable. Fostering close relationships is a part of our mission (we CONNECT), and TUCW welcomes families to participate in the lay leadership of the congregation. This policy describes how to identify conflicts of interest, and what to do when they arise.

Identifying a Conflict of Interest:

A conflict of interest requires three things

1. A fiduciary obligation to the congregation
2. A close relationship with a person or company
3. Any situation where that relationship might conflict with the interests of the congregation.

Fiduciary Obligations

- All employees of the congregation have fiduciary obligations to the congregation
- All members of fiduciary committees have fiduciary obligations to the congregation
- All chairs of committees that have allocated budgets

Close Relationship with Related Entity

- Family relationships are always considered close relationships: spouse/partner, parent/child, sibling, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew, or the spouse of any of these persons
- Basic friendships are not usually close enough to cause a conflict of interest, but you should use your judgment. When it doubt, report the conflict as described below
- In addition, employment/employee relationships are considered "close"

Situation

- Any transaction that involves a payment to the Related Entity (for example, sale, purchase, lease of assets, employment or contracting for services, investments or deposit of funds)
- Appointment or election to a fiduciary committee. The fiduciary committees are listed below:

The Board may amend this list from time to time.

1. Nominating and Leadership Development Committee (NDLC)
2. Auditing Committee
3. Endowment Committee
4. Committee on Ministries
5. Ministerial Search Committee
6. Stewardship
7. Finance
8. Human Resources

What to do When a Conflict of Interest Arises:

Anyone who recognizes a conflict of interest must report it immediately (even if it is recognized while the situation unfolds). Conflicts of interest should be reported as follows:

- All conflicts of interest shall be reported to both the Board chair and the senior minister
- Conflicts of interest that involve the senior minister or Board chair shall also be reported to the executive committee of the Board

All reported conflicts of interest shall be decided upon by the Board of trustees, as follows:

- The individual(s) involved in the conflict shall be invited to make a statement, either verbal or in writing, to the Board before deliberations
- The Board shall deliberate in executive session without those individual(s) present
- The Board will decide what action to take. The action could include one or more of:
 - Decide that the potential conflict of interest will not interfere with the fiduciary obligations
 - Eliminating the individual with the close relationship from consideration / appointment to a fiduciary committee
 - Recusing the member with the fiduciary interest from the situation, which will likely involve having the individual leave the room during any discussion / deliberation about the situation
 - Other action as appropriate

Communication:

The Head of Staff shall assure that all individuals with a fiduciary obligation are informed of this policy. Each current individual with a fiduciary obligation shall:

1. acknowledge receipt of this policy, and
2. disclose any interests in or relationships with individuals or organizations that might cause, or might reasonably be seen as being likely to cause, a conflict of interest

The NDLC shall present this policy to any member or friend of TUCW under consideration for appointment to a fiduciary committee. The Board Chair is responsible for communicating the policy to any member or friend of TUCW under consideration for appointment to a Board committee. The individual under consideration shall not be nominated unless the Board approves the nomination in the process described above.

The Head of Staff shall assure that all contracts for consulting services protect the TUCW from conflicts of interest on the part of the consultant.

Conflicts of Commitment :

No individual with a fiduciary obligation may use or influence the use of the TUCW's financial, personnel, or other resources for personal benefit, or for any purposes other than the achievement of the ends of TUCW.

Employment of Members:

Without prior approval of the Board, a Member may not apply for or accept employment with TUCW or be paid for services to TUCW. A Member may resign their membership contingent upon employment.

Gifts :

Officers, employees, trustees, and committee members may not accept gifts, loans, or pledges of behavior, of any kind, from any source, that could be interpreted as attempting to inappropriately influence any action taken by them on behalf of TUCW.

Delegation of Authority:

The Board of Trustees may delegate any of its responsibilities under this policy to its Executive Committee or the NLDC as appropriate.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

I, _____, hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Unitarian Church in Westport Conflict of Interest Policy.

I understand that my signature below indicates that I have read and understood the Conflict of Interest Policy dated _____.

Date

Name (Print)

Signature