

# CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY FOR THE U.S. SCIENCE SUPPORT OFFICE (USSSP)

The objective of the conflict of interest policy for the U.S. Science Support Program (USSSP), associated with the International Ocean Discovery Program (IODP), is to minimize the potential for both real and perceived conflicts of interest while supporting the efforts of the scientific ocean drilling community and maintaining the fullest possible involvement of knowledgeable community members in providing scientific advice to the program.

USSSP defines a conflict of interest as a situation in which the interests (e.g., personal, familial, professional, or commercial) of a USSSP or USAC member or designated alternate involved in proposal or application nurturing, evaluation, or ranking, have a real or perceived impact, either positive or negative, on the recommendations or decisions of the committee or program.

## Implementation

The U.S. Science Advisory Committee for Scientific Ocean Drilling (USAC) is the national advisory committee for USSSP on U.S. participation in IODP. USAC reviews workshop and pre-drilling proposals and applications to sail on IODP expeditions; nominates new members to IODP panels; and evaluates applications for outreach and education activities associated with IODP. USAC typically reaches decisions by consensus at meetings with staff from the USSSP Office, which may take place in person or electronically via telephone, web meeting, or email.

To address both real and perceived conflicts of interest, USAC and USSSP will operate under the following guidelines:

- All potential conflicts of interest will be declared at the start of every decision-making meeting and resolved by committee or sub-committee consensus.
- Primary investigators (PIs) and proponents will not participate in any part of a meeting during which their proposal or application is discussed, evaluated, or prioritized.
- USSSP staff and/or USAC members who are neither PIs nor proponents may be determined to have a real or perceived conflict of interest. Such cases may exist when a USSSP staff or USAC member comes from the same institution as, is a current collaborator on related research with, or has a close personal connection to a proponent or applicant. In these cases, the conflicted member will refrain from participating in evaluation or prioritization of a particular proposal or application, or absent themselves from the meeting entirely, as determined by committee consensus. At the request of the USAC or Subcommittee Chair, the conflicted

- member may participate in general discussion regarding proposals in order to provide a full range of expertise to the decision-making process.
- USSSP retains discretion over final recommendations and funding decisions as required by its Cooperative Agreement with the National Science Foundation (NSF). At all times USSSP will work with the USAC Chair, NSF Program Manager and the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory Directorate to avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest and to exercise its required discretion in a fair and equitable manner.

Last Updated: 3 May, 2016