



**TREE FUND**  
Cultivating Innovation

## Tree Research and Education Endowment Fund Policy/Procedure Statement

### Subject: Policy on Conflicts of Interest and Disclosure of Certain Interests

1. Purpose: This conflict of interest policy is designed to help directors, officers and employees of the Tree Research and Education Endowment Fund, TREE Fund, identify situations that present potential conflicts of interest and to provide the TREE Fund with a procedure which, if observed, will allow a transaction to be treated as valid and binding even though a director, officer or employee has or may have a conflict of interest with respect to the transaction. All capitalized terms are defined in Part 3 of this policy.
2. Conflict of Interest Defined. For purposes of this policy, the following circumstances shall be deemed to create Conflicts of Interest:
  - a. Outside Interests
    - i. A Contract or Transaction between the TREE Fund and a Responsible Person or Family Member
    - ii. A Contract or Transaction between the TREE Fund and an entity in which a Responsible Person or Family Member has a Material Financial Interest or of which such person is a director, officer, agent, partner, associate, trustee, personal representative, receiver, guardian, custodian, conservator or other legal representative
  - b. Outside Activities
    - i. A Responsible Person competing with the TREE Fund in the rendering of services or in any other Contract or Transaction with a third party

- ii. A Responsible Person's having a Material Financial Interest in; or serving as a director, officer, employee, agent, partner, associate, trustee, personal representative, receiver, guardian, custodian, conservator or other legal representative of, or consultant to; an entity or individual that competes with the TREE Fund in the provision of services or in any other Contract or Transaction with a third party
- c. Gifts, Gratuities and Entertainment. A Responsible Person accepting gifts, entertainment or other favors from any individual or entity that:
  - i. Does or is seeking to do business with, or is a competitor of the TREE Fund; or
  - ii. Has received, is receiving or is seeking to receive a loan or grant, or to secure other financial commitments from TREE Fund; or
  - iii. Is a charitable organization operating under circumstances where it might be inferred that such action was intended to influence or possibly would influence the Responsible Person in the performance of his or her duties. This does not preclude the acceptance of items of nominal or insignificant value or entertainment of nominal or insignificant value which are related to any particular transaction or activity of the TREE Fund.

### 3. Definitions

- a. A "Conflict of Interest" is any circumstance described in Part 2 of this Policy
- b. A "Responsible Person" is any person serving as an officer, employee or member of the Board of Trustees of the TREE Fund
- c. A "Family Member" is a spouse, domestic partner, parent, child or spouse of a child, brother, sister, or spouse of a brother or sister, of a Responsible Person
- d. A "Material Financial Interest" in an entity is a financial interest of any kind, which, in view of all the circumstances, is substantial enough that it would, or reasonably could, affect a Responsible Person's or Family Member's judgment with respect to transactions to which the entity is a party. This includes all forms of compensation.

- e. A “Contract or Transaction” is any agreement or relationship involving the sale or purchase of goods, services, or rights of any kind, the providing or receipt of a loan or grant, the establishment of any other type of pecuniary relationship, or review of a charitable organization by the TREE Fund. The making of a gift to the TREE Fund is not a Contract or Transaction.
- f. An “Item or entertainment of nominal or insignificant value” is any item or entertainment of less than \$100.00.

#### 4. Procedures

- a. Prior to board or committee action on a Contract or Transaction involving a Conflict of Interest,
  - i. A director or committee member having a Conflict of Interest and who is in attendance at the meeting shall disclose all facts material to the Conflict of Interest.
  - ii. Such disclosure shall be reflected in the minutes of the meeting
- b. A director or committee member who plans not to attend a meeting at which he or she has reason to believe that the board or committee will act on a matter in which the person has a Conflict of Interest shall
  - i. Disclose to the chair of the meeting all facts material to the Conflict of Interest.
  - ii. The chair shall report the disclosure at the meeting
  - iii. The disclosure shall be reflected in the minutes of the meeting
- c. A person who has a Conflict of Interest
  - i. Shall not participate in or be permitted to hear the board or committee’s discussion of the matter except to disclose material facts and to respond to questions.
  - ii. Such person shall not attempt to exert his or her personal influence with

respect to the matter, either at or outside the meeting

- d. Responsible Persons who are not members of the Board of Trustees of the TREE Fund, or who have a Conflict of Interest with respect to a Contract or Transaction that is not the subject of Board or committee action
  - i. Shall disclose to the Chair or the Chair's designee any Conflict of Interest that such Responsible Person has with respect to a Contract or Transaction.
  - ii. Such disclosure shall be made as soon as the Conflict of Interest is known to the Responsible Person.
  - iii. The Responsible Person shall refrain from any action that may affect the TREE Fund participation in such Contract or Transaction.
  - iv. In the event it is not entirely clear that a Conflict of Interest exists, the individual with the potential conflict shall disclose the circumstances to the Chairman or the Chairman's designee, who shall determine whether there exists a Conflict of Interest that is subject to this policy.

5. Confidentiality. Each Responsible Person

- a. Shall exercise care not to disclose confidential information acquired in connection with such status or information the disclosure of which might be adverse to the interests of the TREE Fund.
- b. Shall not disclose or use information relating to the business of TREE Fund for the personal profit or advantage of the Responsible Person or a Family Member.

6. Review of Policy

- a. Each new Responsible Person shall be required to review a copy of this policy and to acknowledge in writing that he or she has done so.
- b. This policy shall be reviewed annually by each member of the Board of Trustees.
  - i. Any changes to the policy shall be communicated immediately to all Responsible Persons.

Board Action: 4/16/12

Date:

TREE Fund Chairman Signature:

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or

President/CEO Signature:

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**Conflict of Interest Information Form**

*I have reviewed, and agree to abide by, the Policy of Conflict of Interest of the TREE Fund that is currently in effect.*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please print name: \_\_\_\_\_