

TO: All Health Sciences Center Faculty and Staff, OKC and Tulsa

FROM: Joseph J. Ferretti, Senior Vice President and Provost
Joseph L. Waner, Vice President for Research

DATE: November 11, 2004

SUBJECT: Service as Promotional Speaker for Private Industry

Over the past few months, the Office of Research Administration (ORA) has received several proposed contracts for University employees to serve as promotional speakers for private companies, most often pharmaceutical companies. Please keep in mind that University employees may serve as *educational* speakers – speakers who discuss products or services generally – but not as promotional speakers – speakers who promote a particular product or service.

University Regents' policy prohibits the use of University resources, including employee time, and the University name for the promotion of goods or services. In addition, any use of the University's name or symbols in advertising or promotional materials may be made only with special permission of the Vice President for Public Affairs. Employees who agree to or do promote goods or services in their professional capacity are in violation of University policy.

In addition, University employees are state employees and, as such, are governed by the State's conflict of interest rules. Those rules do not permit the use of state funds to promote private industry, nor do they allow state employees to use their positions for private gain. Violations of state conflicts of interest rules can result in fines, payable by the individual, and/or jail time.

Given the University's status as a public institution and the importance of presenting an image that is unbiased, professional, and respectful of its role as a steward of the resources entrusted to it, it is important that University employees not agree to provide any professional services that compromise, appear to compromise, or have the potential to compromise or appear to compromise their professional judgment, research results, or the like. Any action otherwise is a violation of University policy and state conflicts of interest rules.

Employees serving in educational speaking roles provide an important service to the community and their professions, and we encourage them to continue this service. University policy requires that contracts for employees to serve as educational speakers be routed through ORA for negotiation and authorized signature. Please contact ORA if you have questions regarding that process.