Resolving Situational Conflict of Interest Created by Role Conflict

Role conflict occurs when an individual is fulfilling two roles, and the two roles may be incompatible with each other or may have competing priorities. When role conflict creates competing priorities, situations may arise in which the competing priorities create a conflict of interest. For example, when one of the roles that an individual holds has the ability to make a university-related decision or use university resources in a manner by which the other role that the individual holds benefits from the decision or resources, the situation has created a conflict of interest. Administrators who also pursue traditional faculty roles may find themselves in role conflict. Examples of situational conflict of interest occurring due to this type of role conflict include (but are not limited to):

1) A department head making a decision to assign a college-funded graduate assistantship to support a class the department head is teaching, when the class is of a smaller size or is less teaching intensive than other classes in the department that other faculty teach that do not receive a college-funded graduate assistantship

2) A department head making a decision to cost share department resources to support their internal grant application that builds their own scholarship agenda, while deciding to not cost share department resources to support a faculty member’s scholarship agenda

To resolve the situational conflict of interest, the administrator should not make the university-related decision or use university resources without input and approval of the immediate supervisor.

To see the university’s conflict of interest policy, please see:

https://universitytennesseepolicytech.com/dotNet/documents/?docid=36&public=true