FISCAL MEMORANDUM 09-05

TO: TTI Employees

SUBJECT: Procedures on Acceptance of Travel Reimbursements and Honoraria

TTI employees are sometimes asked to give a speech or make a presentation at a professional meeting or conference on a topic related to their field of expertise. This memorandum establishes procedures to be followed when TTI employees are offered a travel reimbursement and/or honorarium for this type of service.

The ability to accept honoraria is controlled by state law. A violation of these procedures constitutes a violation of state law, which could result in criminal prosecution. It is important to follow these procedures not only to protect individual employees from violating state law, but also to maintain TTI’s long-standing good reputation, which is based on many years of operating with the highest ethics and integrity.

A&M System Policy Guidance

The Texas A&M University System provides guidance on this issue in System Policy 07.04, Benefits, Gifts and Honoraria. Section 2.1 of the policy, states that System employees “shall not solicit, accept, or agree to accept an honorarium in consideration for services they would not have been asked to provide but for their official position or duties. This prohibition includes a request for or acceptance of a payment made to a third party if made in exchange for such services.”

Section 2.2 of the policy states that System employees “may accept the direct provision of or reimbursement for expenses for transportation and lodging incurred in connection with a speaking engagement at a conference or similar event. Meals provided as a part of the event or reimbursement for actual expenses for meals may also be accepted. Participation by the employee in the event “must be more than merely perfunctory.”

TTI Guidance

TTI requested additional guidance on this issue from the A&M System Office of General Counsel. Below are three common scenarios and the procedures that TTI employees should follow for each.
Scenario 1: A TTI employee has a business reason to attend a conference and is also invited to give a speech or make a presentation related to his or her area of expertise, but not because of the employee’s position with TTI.

- The employee may use TTI-approved travel to attend the conference.
- Either TTI or the sponsoring organization may cover the employee’s travel expenses.
- If the employee obtains a letter or email from the sponsoring organization indicating that the honorarium being offered for his or her services is unrelated to the employee’s position with TTI, the employee may accept the honorarium.
- A copy of the letter or email should be attached to the employee’s TTI travel voucher.

Scenario 2: A TTI employee is invited to give a speech or make a presentation related to his or her area of expertise and not because of the employee’s position at TTI, but the employee has no business reason to attend the conference.

- The employee must take annual leave for the duration of the conference.
- The employee’s travel expenses may be covered by the sponsoring organization; TTI cannot cover the employee’s travel expenses.
- The employee may accept an honorarium from the sponsoring organization.

Scenario 3: A TTI Employee is invited to make a presentation because of his or her position at TTI.

- The employee may use TTI-approved travel to attend the conference.
- The employee’s travel expenses may be covered either by TTI or the sponsoring organization.
- The employee may not accept an honorarium under any circumstances.

If you have questions related to this memorandum, please feel free to contact me.

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