

Effective Date: May 1, 2024

Guidelines on Speakers' Bureaus

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences

Overview

Professional ethics calls upon health care professionals to put the best interests of their patients ahead of personal financial interests. Health professionals who are paid by pharmaceutical, medical device, biotech and/or other healthcare-related companies to promote a company's products undermine this ethical principle.

Promotional speaking is commonly referred to as "speakers' bureaus," but may also be called "speaker programs" or "industry-funded educational programs." These are typically developed, funded, and branded as marketing activities of a company that are intended to support educational programs designed solely or predominantly for company promotional, sales, and/or marketing purposes. The company may provide or require prior approval of slides or other educational materials, thus limiting one's independence to control the content.

The Association of American Medical Colleges, of which UC San Diego is a member, urges its member institutions to strongly discourage faculty participation in industry-sponsored speakers' bureaus, in part because such activities place the credibility and integrity of their institution at risk.

Restricted Activities

California Education Code Section 92000 prohibits use of the University of California's name to suggest that the University endorses a product or service. Outside parties or companies may not use the University's name or any acronym thereof, including "UC," "UCSD," or "UC San Diego," without prior written approval, except to identify the University as the employer or work site, or when required to do so by law. As a matter of UC San Diego policy ([PPM 510-10: Policy Statement D](#)), employees may not use the University Name, Campus Name, or their affiliation with the University in any manner that suggests or implies University support or endorsement of any movement, activity, or program. In circumstances where University endorsement or support may be construed from an individual's use, a disclaimer is required.

UC San Diego Health Sciences faculty, staff, students and trainees may not participate in speakers' bureaus or other related activities in which the sponsor determines the content of presentations, in any way controls or limits what may be presented, or expects presenters to act as a company's agent or spokesperson for the purpose of disseminating or marketing company or product information. Similarly, ghostwriting of publications is not permitted.

Exceptions

Participation in an educational activity, accredited CME or not, and receiving payment or reimbursement to present material of your own creation would be considered an honorarium financial relationship, as opposed to a speakers' bureau-type of relationship.

Violations

Violations of these guidelines will be addressed through the relevant UC and/or UC San Diego policies related to codes of conduct, good standing, ethics, and compliance.

Additional Resources

Questions regarding whether an engagement would fall under a restricted activity should be directed to the Office of Health Sciences Academic Affairs at vchspolicy@health.ucsd.edu.