

Contact: Carrie D. Wolinetz, PhD
(301) 634-7650
cwolinetz@faseb.org

FASEB PRESIDENT PAUL W. KINCADE STATEMENT ON NIH CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGULATIONS

Bethesda, Md. — The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) believes that maintaining public trust in medical research is absolutely critical. We support Dr. Zerhouni's efforts to preserve public confidence in science and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). A considerable amount of time and thought went into production of the new regulations and they merit full and careful consideration by our community. The situation at NIH is most unfortunate, and a large number of benign and beneficial relationships may be disrupted as a result of the thoughtless actions of a few.

FASEB and its societies are in the process of evaluating the policy and its impact on scientists. We worry that such stringent restrictions could compromise the ability of NIH to recruit top talent. We also have questions and concerns about the restrictions on uncompensated activities, particularly their impact on the ability of NIH scientists to interact with professional and scientific societies. Scientific societies play an important role in the dissemination of scientific knowledge and scientists' career development. FASEB looks forward to receiving clarification from NIH on the process by which such activities will be reviewed and permitted. We also welcome the opportunity to provide advice during the public comment period.

Interactions between basic scientists and industry have become more numerous and complex. While it is important that biomedical researchers maintain interaction with industry to ensure translation of medical research, it is clearly time to reexamine how conflicts arise and how such situations are perceived by the public. FASEB is taking a proactive approach to this issue in the extramural community through a conference scheduled for June, 2005. The discussion will focus on relationships with industry from the scientists' perspective. We are interested in learning more about how investigators should protect themselves and the public from real and perceived conflicts of interest.

FASEB is comprised of 22 societies with more than 65,000 members, making it the largest coalition of biomedical research associations in the United States. FASEB's mission is to enhance the ability of biomedical and life scientists to improve—through their research—the health, well-being and productivity of all people. FASEB serves the interests of these scientists in those areas related to public policy, facilitates coalition activities among Member Societies and disseminates information on biological research through scientific conferences and publications.