BACKGROUND AND HISTORY:
In furtherance of the mission of the Medical University of South Carolina, and in compliance with federal regulations, a University goal is to advance scientific discoveries that benefit humanity. In 1980, the United States Congress explicitly sanctioned and facilitated by legislation, the commercialization of inventions by permitting academic institutions and scientists to benefit financially if their federally sponsored research leads to commercial products. In addition, interaction between research universities and industry enhances the rapid application of scientific discoveries to the needs of society and maintains international competitiveness of domestic industries.

In 1995, The Board of Trustees of the Medical University of South Carolina approved policies and procedures regarding conflict of interest in relationship to “sponsored research projects, research education and university service”. The purpose of the Research Conflict of Interest Committee is to protect the credibility and integrity of the University’s faculty and staff so that public trust and confidence in faculty and staff actions are shown to be without interest in personal gains, financial or otherwise. Policies and procedures regarding conflict of interest are provided in the Medical University Hospital Authority Policies and Procedures, are referenced in the MUSC Faculty Handbook, and can be found on the MUSC Conflict of Interest website (www.musc.edu/coi).

The Medical University of South Carolina, as a state agency, is governed by the Federal and State Ethics acts which prohibit MUSC from acquiring an equity and/or ownership in private ventures and further restricts how state/public funds are expended. The governing board of the University remains sensitive in the oversight of all potentially conflicting situations to ensure that MUSC is in compliance with all state and federal laws.

As the Medical University of South Carolina conducts research funded by the Public Health Service, it is required by federal law to maintain an appropriate written, enforced policy on conflict of interest that complies with 42 CFR Part 50 Subpart F “Responsibility of Applicants for Promoting Objectivity in Research for which Public Health Service Funding is Sought”.

Financial conflicts of interest are disclosed on an annual basis. Whenever a new conflict of interest arises or when a significant change occurs concerning an existing disclosure, a new disclosure form is completed and submitted for review either in advance of the anticipated change or within 30 days of the event.

CLASSIFICATION:
The Research Conflict of Interest Committee is an enterprise-wide standing committee. The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost will review the Charter annually for continued need and for revisions, as appropriate.

FORMAL CHARGES:
The MUSC Research Conflict of Interest Committee shall establish and maintain oversight of any perceived or real conflict arising directly or indirectly from research, whether sponsored research, non-sponsored research, start-up ventures, or other activities that require research objectivity under
circumstances that could be influenced by personal financial gain. Questions of financial conflict of interest, whether perceived or real, should be referred to this Committee. Specific charges for the Committee are to:

- Conduct an assessment of all annual Conflict of Interest Disclosures related to research activities as well as other potential sources of conflict of interest disclosure, e.g., Proposal Data Sheets, outside professional activity related to faculty start-up ventures and applications for IRB approval.

- Report to the University Conflict of Interest Official and the Associate Provost for Research the nature of the conflict of interest and the action taken by the Committee.

- Approve or disapprove plans to manage perceived or real conflict of interest, where appropriate, and recommend any corrective actions as necessary to assure that the approved management plan is followed.

- Provide minutes of Committee meetings as well as an annual report of the Committee’s activities to the University Conflict of Interest Official and the Associate Provost for Research.

- Maintain an awareness of financial conflict of interest policies and guidelines issued by entities that sponsor research such as Public Health Service (PHS) (e.g., Health and Human Services (HHS), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Food and Drug Administration (FDA)), National Science Foundation (NSF), industry, foundations and not for profit organizations.

- Review existing policies related to the reporting and management of potential faculty, staff, and institutional financial conflict of interest at the request of the University Conflict of Interest Committee and the University Conflict of Interest Official, if applicable, to recommend new and/or revised policies and procedures to ensure appropriate oversight and management of University financial conflict of interest related to research.

REPORTING CHANNELS/PROCEDURES:
The Research Conflict of Interest Committee Chair will be a standing member of the University Conflict of Interest Committee, serving as a liaison between these committees. The Committee shall report to the University Conflict of Interest Official and will copy reports of the Committee’s final deliberations as appropriate to the Associate Provost for Research and the University Compliance Officer.

Violations of University or Authority policies, including failure to avoid a prohibited activity or disclose a conflict of interest in a timely manner, will be addressed in accordance with applicable policies and procedures that may include disciplinary actions up to and including termination of employment.

If an investigator has failed to comply with the MUSC conflict of interest policy and this has potentially biased the design, conduct or reporting of the PHS funded research, the Director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs will promptly notify the awarding agency of the corrective action implemented.

MEMBERSHIP/TERMS OF APPOINTMENT:
Because of the focus on faculty research, the MUSC Research Conflict of Interest Committee shall be composed of faculty and research support staff. The voting members of the Committee shall be composed of a minimum of five individuals who hold faculty appointments and who represent a reasonable cross section of the academic disciplines that are involved in scholarly research. All faculty members shall be appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost to serve staggered
three-year terms. Initially, two faculty appointments will be for one year, two faculty appointments will be for two years and two faculty appointments will be for three years. All subsequent faculty appointments will be for three years and a member who serves two consecutive three-year terms shall not be reappointed for at least two years after completing those terms.

In addition, the Committee shall have the following non-voting members who shall serve in an ex officio capacity: MUSC Conflict of Interest Officer; Director, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs; MUSC General Counsel; Executive Director, MUSC Foundation for Research Development; Director, Office of Research Integrity; Director, University Compliance; Director, University Risk Management.

All Committee members must agree and complete statements indicating that all information and deliberations are confidential.

**OFFICERS:**
A Chair shall be appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost and will serve a two-year term and may be reappointed at the discretion of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost. Upon the recommendation of the Committee Chair, a Vice Chair may also be appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost for an undeclared term and with the authority to conduct any necessary business during the Chair’s absence.

**AD-HOC SUBCOMMITTEES:**
There may be ad-hoc, task-oriented subcommittees appointed as needed by the Chair.

**FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS:**
The Committee shall meet monthly. Additional meetings may be called or regularly scheduled meetings may be cancelled by the Committee Chair or by two thirds of the voting members of the Committee. Cancellation of a scheduled meeting should involve the lack of urgent or sufficient items of business, or too few members present to constitute a quorum.

**NOTICE OF MEETINGS:**
An annual schedule of Committee meetings shall be determined at the beginning of each academic year. Notification of meetings shall be in compliance with South Carolina State Law.

**MEETING AGENDA AND SUPPORT MATERIAL:**
A formal meeting agenda and appropriate supportive materials shall be available for each Committee member.

**COMMITTEE MINUTES:**
The minutes of each meeting shall be prepared in draft form and approved by the Committee Chair. Because of the need to resolve particular issues in a timely manner, it is important that the draft minutes containing all actions or rulings be forwarded to the University Conflict of Interest Official, with copies to the Associate Provost for Research, within 2 weeks of the meeting.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**
The Committee Chair shall make available all needed written reports, recommendations, or inquiries on behalf of the Committee to the University Conflict of Interest Official. Formal rulings of the Committee will be reported in Committee minutes and in the Committee’s annual report. Records of all financial disclosures and all actions taken by the Research Conflict of Interest Committee will be maintained for at least three years from the date of submission of the final expenditures report(s) for the applicable project(s) or, where applicable, from other dates specified in South Carolina State law, 42 CFR 50 Subpart F or by other federal funding or oversight agencies.
STAFF SUPPORT:
The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs will provide staff assistance to the Committee and its Chair.

MEETING QUORUM:
A simple majority of the voting Committee membership will constitute the necessary quorum for conducting official Committee business.

AMENDMENT TO THIS CHARTER:
Should any amendment to this charter be required, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost shall work with the Committee Chair to craft an amendment suitable to all parties. The amended charter shall be completed, signed and issued with all possible haste. When the initiative for such an amendment comes from the Committee, a written request from the Chair to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost shall be provided.

Mark S. Sothmann, Ph.D.
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

June 25, 2015
Date: