ACM Awards Committee

Guidelines on Conflict of Interest

(last updated March 2, 2021)

Conflict of interest (COI) is generally recognized as a situation where there is risk that a professional judgment or decision could be influenced by some secondary interest. In the context of ACM award committees, COI derives from a committee member's relationship with a nominee and/or affiliation with a nominee's institution. Members of ACM award subcommittees avoid the appearance of any impropriety by adhering to the following guidelines.

1. **ACM officers and executives do not serve as nominator or endorser for any nomination submitted for an ACM award, including awards sponsored by ACM's Special Interest Groups.** This restriction includes the ACM President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, Past President, CEO, and COO.

2. **Members of an ACM award committee do not serve as nominator or endorser for any nomination submitted to that committee.** If you have nominated/endorsed a candidate, inform the committee chair immediately so that one of two actions may be taken: (a) the nomination will be set aside for the year, or (b) you will step down from the committee for the year.

3. **Members of an ACM award committee are not eligible for that award during their term of committee service.** When agreeing to serve on a committee, you should understand that if you were to be nominated, the nomination would be disqualified. Persons preparing nominations should be advised that committee members are not eligible.

4. **Members of an ACM award committee should not be directly involved in nominations prior to their submittal.** You can answer general questions about what a nomination should include, but you should not pre-review or comment on draft nominations.

   It is normal for the committee as a group to develop a list of potential candidates and a committee member may be asked to contact a potential nominator, but such communications should be kept general in nature so that they cannot be construed as assistance or raise expectations about the outcome.

5. **Members of an ACM award committee maintain confidentiality about the internal discussions of the committee.** Information about committee deliberations should not be shared with anyone outside the committee, nor should the winner be discussed until ACM has issued the formal press release.

6. **Members of an ACM award committee do not provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates.** If a member is asked for feedback, this policy should be cited.

   On rare occasions, and with the approval of the committee, the chair may contact a nominator to encourage/discourage future re-nomination of a particular candidate. In such cases, feedback should be limited to general information about elements of the package that made the case weak (e.g., over-reliance on endorsements from the same institution as the candidate/nominator, endorsements that just reiterate the nomination without providing new

insight, or candidates whose accomplishments are not a good fit for the award). Note that it is not appropriate to offer evaluative comments on the candidate's qualifications or specific endorsements. The committee is under no obligation to provide feedback for any candidate, and it must be made clear that responding to the suggestions will not necessarily result in future success.

7. **Members of an ACM award committee self-identify any relationships/affiliations that might be perceived as a source of potential bias, and inform the committee chair of the COIs before any candidates have been discussed.** Identify any candidates with whom you have had close personal or working relationships within the past 4 years, anyone for whom you were thesis advisor/advisee, or any other case where your judgment could be affected. Also identify any candidates from your current institution or one where you worked within the past 4 years.

8. **If COIs are identified, the conflicted committee members will recuse themselves from discussions related to the corresponding nominations**. Recusal means that the committee member will refrain from any commentary/input regarding the conflicted nomination before or during the decision-making process, and will absent him/herself during committee discussions of the conflicted nomination. When the chair has a COI with a nomination, the deputy chair will manage the discussion of that nomination.