

Conflict of Interest Policy for CSLA College of Fellows

APPROVED BY THE COLLEGE OF FELLOWS 25 JUNE 2020

1.0 Introduction

At the 2019 AGM, the Executive Committee was asked by the members to develop a Conflict of Interest (COI) Policy to guide members and in particular, the Jury members who review and select Fellows Elect. An initial discussion paper was prepared by Arthur Schafer, ethics specialist at the request of Heather Cram, Jury Chair. The following policy document is based on the comments in that memo.

2.0 Definition of “Conflict of Interest”

Conflict of Interest (COI) situations occur when (1) a person has an obligation to exercise judgement or discretion in a disinterested manner, that is, impartially, but (2) at the same time has a vested interest (financial or personal/career) that could potentially bias his or her judgement.

People often fail to recognize when their personal interest has biased their judgement. That is, COI operates at a sub-conscious as well as a conscious level.

Because COI is a risk factor for bias, professionals, including landscape architects, have an obligation to avoid even the appearance of bias when it comes to the selection of Fellows by declaring their conflicts and recusing themselves.

3.0 Recommended Policy and Procedure

Policy

A member of the CSLA College of Fellows Jury is to exercise her/his judgement impartially throughout the selection process of nominated candidates. Selection of Fellows must be based entirely on a review of the professionally relevant information provided to the panel of jurors, none of whom stands to benefit

financially or personally from the decision. In other words, no juror shall receive direct or indirect profit from his or her position.

Conflict of interest exists if a candidate nominated to become a Fellow is:

- an employer,
- an employee,
- a partner,
- a family member or
- a close personal friend

of a juror on the Fellowship Selection Committee

Jury members are also considered to be in a “conflict of interest” whenever members of their family, business partners or close personal associates may personally benefit either directly or indirectly, financially or otherwise, from their position as a juror. Personal or fiduciary relationships with the Fellow Elect should be identified to the Jury Chair and the Jury member should opt to recuse from consideration of that Fellow Elect, unless advised otherwise by the Jury Chair.

Conflict of interest *may* exist if a candidate nominated to become a Fellow is:

- a direct competitor where impartial assessment is questionable.

Procedure

1. Jury members must be provided with the COF Conflict of Interest Policy before every meeting.
2. If the juror is not certain he/she is in a conflict of interest position, the matter may be brought before the Chair and the College of Fellows Executive Committee or CSLA Board for advice and guidance. If the chair is not certain he/she is in a conflict of interest position, the matter may be brought before the College of Fellows Executive Committee or CSLA Board for advice and guidance.
3. Conflicts must be declared to the Chair at least 24 hours ahead of the jury meeting.
4. If a juror finds himself/herself in a position of conflict of Interest with the candidate, the juror must recuse him or herself from either discussing or

voting on the suitability of the candidate for election to Fellowship and shall not attempt to personally influence the outcome.

5. The Chair must record the declaration of the conflict of interest on the report of deliberations.