

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
REGENTS COMMUNICATION

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Research Agreement between the University of Michigan and Clinc, Inc.

Action Requested: Authorization to enter into Agreement

Preamble:

A statutory conflict of interest situation was identified by the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects while reviewing the Proposal Approval Form which then triggered a review by the UMOR Conflict of Interest Review Committee. A plan for management of the possible risks associated with the conflict of interest was then developed and approved by the Committee and agreed to by the parties involved.

This proposed research agreement (“Agreement”) falls under the State of Michigan Conflict of Interest Statute because Professors Jason Mars, Lingjia Tang, Dr. Michael Laurenzano, and Mr. Johann Hauswald, are all employees of the University of Michigan (“University”), and partial owners of Clinc, Inc. The law permits such an Agreement provided it is disclosed to the Board of Regents (“Regents”) of the University of Michigan and approved in advance by a 2/3 vote.

Background:

Dr. Jason Mars, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Dr. Lingjia Tang, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Michael Laurenzano, a Research Fellow in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, and Johann Hauswald, a Graduate Student Research Assistant in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, are partial owners of a for-profit company called Clinc, Inc. (the “Company”). The Company wishes to fund a project entitled “Prototyping Tools to Improve Crowd Bases Training for IVA Development” (ORSP #17-PAF07926) in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science under the direction of Dr. Walter Lasecki. The purpose of this project is to develop prototype tools that create, manage, understand, and analyze training data in order to invent new and enhance existing intelligent virtual agent (IVA) technologies.

Agreement Terms:

The terms of the Agreement conform to University policy. The period of performance for the project is approximately one (1) year. The amount of funding support will not exceed \$74,000. Since research projects are often amended, this agreement includes a provision for changes in time and scope. University procedures for approval of these changes will be followed and additional conflict of interest review will be done as appropriate.

Impact of the Agreement:

The Agreement will support an effort by Dr. Walter Lasecki to use his expertise and University laboratory, as well as other University resources, to develop prototype tools that create, manage, understand, and analyze training data in order to invent new and enhance existing IVA technologies

Recommendations:

This matter has been reviewed and approved by the UMOR Conflict of Interest Review Committee. In light of this disclosure and our finding that the Agreement was negotiated in conformance with standard University practices, I recommend that the Board of Regents approve the University's entering into this Agreement with Clinc, Inc.

Respectfully submitted,



S. Jack Hu  
Vice President for Research

September 2017