

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

REGENTS COMMUNICATION

Approved by the Regents  
January 19, 2012

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Research Agreement between the University of Michigan and FlexDex LLC

Action Requested: Authorization to enter into Research Agreement

Preamble:

A statutory conflict of interest situation was identified by the Division of Research Development and Administration while reviewing the proposed agreement which then triggered a review by the OVPR Conflict of Interest Review Committee and the Medical School Conflict of Interest Board. A plan for management of the possible risks associated with the conflict of interest will be developed and approved by the OVPR Conflict of Interest Review Committee and/or the Medical School Conflict of Interest Board and agreed to by the parties involved

This proposed research agreement ("Agreement") falls under the State of Michigan Conflict of Interest Statute because Professors James Geiger and Shorya Awatar are both employees of the University of Michigan ("University") and partial owners of FlexDex LLC. The law permits such an Agreement provided it is disclosed to the executive officers and approved in advance by a 2/3 vote of the Regents of the University of Michigan.

Background:

Dr. Geiger, a Professor of Surgery, in the Medical School, and Dr. Shorya Awatar, a Professor in Mechanical Engineering, in the College of Engineering, are the partial owners of a for-profit company called FlexDex LLC (the "Company"). The Company was formed recently to commercialize a minimally invasive surgical tool, has obtained an option from the University of Michigan and now desires to support research at the University of Michigan related to that technology.

Agreement Terms:

The terms of the proposed Agreement will conform to University policy. The period of performance for the project is expect to be six (6) months and the amount of funding support is anticipated at \$59,725. Since research projects are often amended, these agreements include provisions for changes in time, amount, and scope of each supported project. 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. Awtar and Dr. Geiger to use their expertise and their respective University laboratories and other University resources to develop a new, low-cost laparoscopic surgery tool technology that provides the enhanced dexterity and intuitive control currently seen only in multi-million dollar surgical robots.

Recommendations:

These matters will be reviewed and approved by the OVPR Conflict of Interest Review Committee and/or the Medical School Conflict of Interest Board and a plan will be developed to manage the potential risks associated with the conflict of interest. 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 of the University's entering into this Agreement with FlexDex LLC.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen R. Forrest". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Stephen R. Forrest  
Vice President for Research

January 2012