

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS COMMUNICATION

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Subcontract Agreement between the University of Michigan and Soar Technology, 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 agreement (“Agreement”) falls under the State of Michigan Conflict of Interest Statute because Professor John Laird is an employee of the University of Michigan (“University”), and a partial owner of Soar Technology, 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. John Laird, a Professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, is the partial owner of a for-profit company called Soar Technology, Inc. (the “Company”). The Company wishes to fund a DARPA (prime) sponsored project entitled “Serial Interactions in Imperfect Information Games Applied to Complex Military Decision Making (SI3-CMD)” (ORSP# 19-PAF02456) in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering under the direction of Dr. Michael Wellman. The purpose of this project is to explore and demonstrate the feasibility of applying game theory and recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI) to complex military decision making.

Agreement Terms:

The terms of the Agreement conform to University policy. The period of performance for the project is approximately eighteen (18) months. The amount of funding support will not exceed \$400,000. Since research projects are often amended, this agreement includes provisions 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. Wellman to use his expertise and University laboratory, as well as other University resources, to produce a detailed feasibility analysis and provide a pilot demonstration on a realistic problem in the area on cyberspace operations.

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 Soar Technology, Inc.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. Hu", is written above the typed name.

S. Jack Hu
Vice President for Research

February 2019