March 1, 2016

Background on the UM System Office of Federal Relations and Lobbying Disclosure Rules

The University of Missouri System established an Office of Federal Relations in Washington DC in January 2015.

The Office consists of a Director (Sarah Spreitzer) and an Assistant Director (Meghan Sanguinette). The Office is meant to be a resource to the System and campuses in interacting with Capitol Hill and the federal agencies, as well as tracking federal funding opportunities through the federal agencies.

Sarah and Meghan are federally registered lobbyists under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 and make quarterly reports to the House and Senate regarding the amount of funds used and issues lobbied on for the University of Missouri.

Note: A “registered” lobbyist is someone who spends more than 20 percent of their time in “lobbying activities” (defined below). A visit to Capitol Hill for a few hours does not require you to register as a lobbyist.

As part of this quarterly disclosure, the University is required to report on topics lobbied and monies spent by faculty and staff representing the University of Missouri. As part of this regular reporting, faculty and staff are required to report time and expenses for lobbying efforts made on the University’s behalf to the UM System Office of Federal Relations for inclusion in the University’s quarterly lobbying reports.

A copy of our quarterly report can be found here: http://soprweb.senate.gov/index.cfm?event=getFilingDetails&filingID=D7218097-8065-4BD7-800D-F69E55E7484F&filingTypeID=78

The term "lobbying activities" means lobbying contacts and efforts in support of such contacts, including preparation and planning activities, research and other background work that is intended, at the time it is performed, for use in contacts, and coordination with the lobbying activities of others. Federal lobbying activities include contacts (in person, e-mail, letter or by phone) with covered executive and legislative branch officials regarding:

1. legislation, legislative proposals, rules, regulations, executive orders, programs, policies, or positions of the government;
2. administration or execution of federal programs or policies (including federal contracts and grants); and,
3. nomination or confirmation of a person for a position subject to confirmation by the Senate.
In general, covered executive branch officials are political appointees, not program managers or grant administrators. Covered legislative branch officials are generally Members of Congress and their staff and employees.

If a faculty member or staff engages in a “lobbying activity” as a University of Missouri representative, we request that they submit a form through ecompliance: https://research.missouri.edu/compliance/lobbying

In general, no federal funds may be used for federal lobbying activities. Several federal agencies, including NIH, include more detailed rules about lobbying activities of grantees:

- DOE: http://energy.gov/management/lobbying

Federal Regulation/ Restrictions on Lobbying: http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=393301a7cdccca1ea71f18aae51824e7&node=34:1.1.1.1.28&rgn=div5

Example: You may not use federal grant money to travel to DC and then use that trip to participate in Hill advocacy visits with a professional organization. Non-federal funds would need to be used for travel to and from DC.

Reporting of lobbying activities through the ecompliance site allows us to make a good faith effort to report our issues and monies spent.

Feel free to contact the UM System Office of Federal Relations with questions or concerns.

We are also happy to help schedule and facilitate meetings with congressional offices and staff.

We are here to be a resource!

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