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Registration Requirements Related to the Academic Sector

This advisory opinion is issued by the registrar under the authority of subsection 10.(1) of the *Lobbyists Registration Act* (hereafter "the Act"). The purpose of this opinion is to provide guidance on the application of the Act.

Questions have come from the academic sector, as to whether it is only the academic Dean, all senior management at an institution of higher learning (predominantly universities and colleges) or all professors that must be listed in a registration. All new university faculty members may not be required to register as in-house lobbyists on the sole basis that the institution communicates with public office holders. It is the senior officer of the organization who must register and list personnel within the institution who lobby. Similarly, for staff members responsible for government relations or for securing grant funding (excluding research grants provided by organizations with peer review processes), the senior officer of the organization would be required to register their names.

The situation differs where faculty members provide independent advice to government bodies but do not represent the views or interests of their employers, that is, the institution where they teach or conduct research. The Act respects academic independence. Professors often speak as experts on public policy issues and do not represent the institution where they are principally employed. Therefore, where faculty members communicate an independent opinion on a matter of public policy, and are not paid by their employer or a third party to express that opinion, registration will be not required. When the same faculty members is remunerated to communicate opinion on behalf of a third party, such as a private firm or special interest group, they will be required to disclose such activity under the category of consultant lobbyists.

Similarly, academics with an ownership interest in a commercial venture (or employed in that fashion), related or not to the learning institution for which they work, or in external research ventures, and who communicate with public office holders on behalf of those ventures with an expectation of future financial benefits, will be required to register as in-house lobbyists when communicating, provided that lobbying constitutes a significant part of their duties.

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