



Office of the Chancellor

March 20, 2024

Legal Division
State Ethics Commission
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

RE: Disclosure under M.G.L. Chapter 268A, Section 6

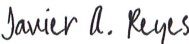
Dear Sir/Madam:

Pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 268A, Section 6, I enclose the following documents for filing with the Ethics Commission as required under the statute:

1. Disclosure of Financial Interest form and Memorandum both dated January 8, 2024, from Associate Professor Jacquie Kurland to request permission to extend appointment of her spouse, Polly Stokes, as a part-time Speech Language Pathologist/Lab Manager from March 22, 2024 through March 21, 2025 pursuant to her Phase III NIH R21 grant.

2. My letter of determination, dated March 20, 2024, which permits Associate Professor Jacquie Kurland to extend appointment of her spouse, Polly Stokes, as a part-time Speech Language Pathologist/Lab Manager from March 22, 2024 through March 21, 2025 pursuant to her Phase III NIH R21 grant.


Very truly yours,

DocuSigned by:

E2C62B100CBB443...
Javier A. Reyes
Chancellor

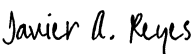
Enclosures

**DISCLOSURE BY NON-ELECTED STATE EMPLOYEE OF FINANCIAL INTEREST
AND DETERMINATION BY APPOINTING AUTHORITY
AS REQUIRED BY G. L. c. 268A, § 6**

| | |
|---|---|
| STATE EMPLOYEE INFORMATION | |
| Name: | Jacque Kurland |
| Title or Position: | Associate Professor |
| State Agency: | University of Massachusetts Amherst |
| Agency Address: | Dept. of Speech, Language, & Hearing Sciences 358 North Pleasant Street Amherst, MA 01003 |
| Office Phone: | (413) 545-4007 |
| Office E-mail: | jacque@umass.edu |
| | My duties require me to participate in a particular matter, and I may not participate because of a financial interest that I am disclosing here. I request a determination from my appointing authority about how I should proceed. |
| PARTICULAR MATTER | |
| Particular matter E.g., a judicial or other proceeding, application, submission, request for a ruling or other determination, contract, claim, controversy, charge, accusation, arrest, decision, determination, or finding. | Please describe the particular matter. This disclosure is in the matter of re-appointing my spouse to fulfill the role of part-time Speech Language Pathologist/Lab Manager in my research laboratory. Please see copy of attached letter to UMass Amherst Chancellor Reyes. |
| Your required participation in the particular matter: E.g., approval, disapproval, decision, recommendation, rendering advice, investigation, other. | Please describe the task you are required to perform with respect to the particular matter. I am the principal investigator on the research studies performed in the lab. |
| FINANCIAL INTEREST IN THE PARTICULAR MATTER | |
| Write an X by all that apply. | <input type="checkbox"/> I have a financial interest in the matter. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> My immediate family member has a financial interest in the matter. <input type="checkbox"/> My business partner has a financial interest in the matter. <input type="checkbox"/> I am an officer, director, trustee, partner or employee of a business organization, and the business organization has a financial interest in the matter. <input type="checkbox"/> I am negotiating or have made an arrangement concerning future employment with a person or organization, and the person or organization has a financial interest in the matter. |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Financial interest in the matter | Please explain the financial interest and include a dollar amount if you know it. 1) Fourteen weeks (20 hours/week March 22, 2024 through June 30, 2024) benefitted salary on NIH grant – Salary: \$9,959; Fringe: \$4,100; 2) Fourteen weeks (5 hours/week March 22, 2024 through June 30, 2024) benefitted salary on internal grant: \$ 2,490; Fringe: \$1,025; and 3) Thirty-eight weeks (1-5 hours/week July 1, 2024 through March 21, 2025) hourly unbenefitted on internal grant (\$36/hr) |
| Employee signature: |  |
| Date: | 1/8/24 |

DETERMINATION BY APPOINTING OFFICIAL

| | |
|--|---|
| | APPOINTING AUTHORITY INFORMATION |
| Name of Appointing Authority: | Javier A. Reyes |
| Title or Position: | Chancellor |
| Agency/Department: | Chancellor's Office |
| Agency Address: | University of Massachusetts – Amherst 374 Whitmore Administration Building Amherst, MA 01003 |
| Office Phone: | (413) 545-2211 |
| Office E-mail | chancellor@umass.edu |
| | DETERMINATION |
| Determination by appointing authority: Write an X by your selection. | As appointing official, as required by G.L. c. 268A, § 6, I have reviewed the particular matter and the financial interest identified above by a state employee. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I am assigning the particular matter to another employee, or <input type="checkbox"/> I am assuming responsibility for the particular matter, or <input type="checkbox"/> I have determined that the financial interest is not so substantial as to be deemed likely to affect the integrity of the services which the Commonwealth may expect from the employee. |
| Appointing Authority signature: | DocuSigned by:  E2C62B100CBB443... |
| Date: | 03/20/2024 |
| Comment: | |

Attach additional pages if necessary.

File copy with:

State Ethics Commission, One Ashburton Place, Room 619, Boston, MA 02108

University of
Massachusetts
Amherst

School of Public Health
& Health Sciences

Department of Speech, Language, & Hearing Sciences

Jacquie Kurland

Associate Professor

January 8, 2024

Re: Disclosure and Compliance with Conflict of Interest Law on Spousal Hire
for Part-time Speech Language Pathologist / Lab Manager (Kurland, PI)

Dear Chancellor Reyes,

I am writing to request your approval in compliance with the Conflict of Interest Law on Spousal Hire, so that I may continue to fill a key personnel position in my lab. The extension I am requesting covers a partial year of grant funding (March 22, 2024 – June 30, 2024) for a part-time benefited position (20 hours/week) on an NIH-funded grant and an additional 5 hours/week during this same period on an internal award, plus the remainder of the year on an hourly basis. I am seeking to re-appoint my spouse, Polly Stokes (M.S., CCC-SLP) to the position of Speech Language Pathologist (SLP)/Lab Manager in my research lab, the Brain Research on Chronic Aphasia (BRoCA) lab.

In the interest of avoiding any appearance of conflict of interest, Dr. Sarah Poissant (Associate Professor and Chair, SLHS), has agreed to be the supervisor of record.

Over the last 12 years, in accordance with the UMass Nepotism Policy, I have obtained the support of my Chair and the Dean of SPHHS, as well as the prior Chancellor's determination that I could proceed with the hire and re-appointment of Polly Stokes, and UMass has filed the appropriate Disclosure Form with the State Ethics Commission. Since the last letter of determination allowed for another 12 months re-appointment through March 21, 2024, I am now again seeking approvals from my Chair, my Dean, and from you.

For your information, over the last period since reappointing Polly, we have completed data acquisition on the third phase of developing a test of transactional success in conversation in post-stroke aphasia. Thanks to a Phase III NIH R21 ("*The Brief Assessment of Transactional Success (BATS): A Clinically Feasible Measure of Transactional Success in Aphasic Conversation*"), we have acquired and are in the process of analyzing a rich dataset of story retellings that Polly collected from 96 aphasic participants and familiar and unfamiliar conversation partners. In addition, thanks to a Dean's Research Enhancement Award and a no-cost extension of our FRG award, we completed a 10-week pilot intervention study that had been halted midstream during the pandemic.

Polly was the primary person responsible for recruitment, scheduling, and testing of most participants. She also remains heavily involved in data management, data analysis, and assisting me with preparation of tables and graphs for dissemination of the study results and for the next grant proposal. She is also still responsible for managing the majority of our part-

time and temporary personnel, including the research assistants, and student volunteers. She is assisting me with preparation and editing of manuscripts, and maintenance of our IRB e-protocols.

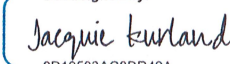
As I have noted before, I owe a great deal of the successful administration of the BRoCA lab's research studies to my current SLP/Lab Manager, Polly Stokes. Beyond her academic training and clinical competence, she has demonstrated a remarkable ability to keep focus on both the big picture and small details of our lab's research projects, always maintaining a calm temperament under fire. We have worked under tremendous pressure to meet our deadlines despite lab space limitations, and despite the sudden changes to our treatment study necessitated by Covid-19. In the current phase, all the data was collected via remote video teleconferencing software, which required a little extra training with our aphasic participants. Polly is unfazed by the challenges, has always met the recruitment/enrollment plans, and is maintaining relationships to ensure that we continue to be able to recruit large numbers of aphasic stroke survivors and conversation partners in the next phase of our externally funded research. It is no exaggeration to say that this clinical research would not be possible without her contributions to the lab.

Given the ambitious schedule of this two-year R21 grant, I am anxious to keep the same team in place so that we may continue the successful implementation of our ongoing clinical research. Moreover, she is listed as Key Personnel in the grant proposal.

I therefore respectfully request your determination regarding this disclosure for the next 12-month period, (i.e., March 22, 2024 – March 21, 2025). I have obtained the support of my Chair (Dr. Sarah Poissant) and the Dean of SPHHS (Dr. Anna Maria Siega-Riz) as demonstrated by their signatures below.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and approval of my request at your earliest convenience. If you have any concerns or questions in this matter, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

9D19593AC8DD49A
Jacquie Kurland

--

Jacquie Kurland, PhD, CCC-SLP
Associate Professor
Department of Speech, Language & Hearing Sciences
Neuroscience and Behavior Program
Phone: (413) 545-4007
Email: jacquie@umass.edu
Website: <http://blogs.umass.edu/jacquie/>

I have read through the above disclosure regarding an exception hire for Dr. Kurland’s spouse during a 52-week period, and I support her decision.

DocuSigned by:
Sarah Poissant
AE7061DF179B47B...

1/8/2024

Dr. Sarah Poissant, Chair, Dept. of SLHS

Date

DocuSigned by:
Anna Maria Siega-Riz
240E00DFE80B419...

1/9/2024

Dr. Anna Maria Siega-Riz, Dean, SPHHS

Date



Office of the Chancellor

March 20, 2024

Jacquie Kurland, PhD
Associate Professor
Department of Communication Disorders
School of Public Health & Health Disorders
University of Massachusetts Amherst
358 North Pleasant Street
Amherst, MA 01003-9296

Dear Dr. Kurland:

I acknowledge receipt of your Disclosure of Financial Interest and Memorandum both dated January 8, 2024. You request permission to extend appointment of your spouse, Polly Stokes, as a Speech Language Pathologist/Lab Manager in your research lab, the Brain Research on Chronic Aphasia (BRoCA). Specifically, you seek approval to appoint Polly Stokes from March 22, 2024 through June 30, 2024 for a 14-week part-time benefited position at 20 hours/week for a salary of \$9,959.00 and fringe benefits of \$4,100.00 payable through Phase III of the NIH R21 grant: *"The Brief Assessment of Transactional Success (BATS): A Clinically Feasible Measure of Transactional Success in Aphasic Conversation"*. You also seek approval to concurrently appoint Polly Stokes for an additional 5 hours/week during the same period at a salary of \$2,490.00 and fringe benefits of \$1,025.00 payable through an internal award. Finally, you seek approval to appoint Polly Stokes for a 38-week part-time unbenefited position for the period from July 1, 2024 through March 21, 2025 at 1-5 hours/week at \$36/hour for a maximum salary of \$6,840.00 payable through an internal grant. As further detailed in your Memorandum and Disclosure, you indicate that this approval would allow Ms. Stokes to continue to assist in Phase III of the above-referenced NIH R21 grant, as well as continue to manage the majority of your lab's part-time and temporary personnel, and assist with the preparation and editing of manuscripts, and maintenance of your IRB e-protocols. You further indicate that Ms. Stokes' maximum salary for this 12-month period will be \$19,289.00, plus fringe benefits of \$5,125.00.

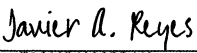
Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 268A, Section 6, in part, prohibits a state employee from employing immediate family members and from compensating them for services rendered except when I "assign the particular matter to another employee [...], in which case it shall not be a violation for [. . . you] to participate in the particular matter."

In the interest of avoiding an actual or apparent conflict of interest, I understand that Dr. Sarah F. Poissant, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Communication Disorders, has agreed to be Ms. Stokes' supervisor of record. Based upon the information in the disclosures you have submitted, I

delegate supervision of Polly Stokes for purposes of pay determination and performance evaluation to Dr. Sarah F. Poissant, Associate Professor and Chair. This determination will allow you to utilize the services of your spouse through March 21, 2025.

The statute requires you to advise the Ethics Commission of the nature and circumstances of the particular matter and make full disclosure of that financial interest. As directed by statute, I am sending a copy of this written determination letter along with your memorandum and disclosure form to the State Ethics Commission for filing.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

E2C62B100CB8443...
Javier A. Reyes
Chancellor

Enclosures

cc: Michael Malone, Interim Provost
Sarah F. Poissant, Associate Professor and Chair, Communication Disorders
Allison B. Lepper, Amherst Chief Associate Counsel



School of Public Health
& Health Sciences
Department of Communication Disorders
Sarah F. Poissant
Associate Professor and Chair

January 17, 2024

To: Chancellor Reyes

From: Sarah F. Poissant 

Re: Continuing Appointment of Polly Stokes

This memo confirms that I have agreed to be the supervisor of record for Polly Stokes, M.S., CCC-SLP, who is employed part-time in the aphasia research lab of her spouse, Jacquie Kurland. Ms. Stokes is a Speech Language Pathologist and Lab Manager for Dr. Kurland. In the interest of avoiding any appearance of a conflict of interest, I will be the supervisor of record.