

## **Council of Independent Colleges Sponsorship Guidelines**

The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) has a long history of rich, creative, and successful partnerships with foundations, the corporate and philanthropic communities, and companies that serve colleges and universities. CIC accepts grants from corporations and foundations and sponsorships from businesses and other organizations. CIC seeks to maintain long-term sponsorship relationships with companies that serve small and mid-sized independent colleges and universities by enabling these companies to contribute to certain CIC programs and services.

CIC seeks corporate support only from those corporations and companies that adhere to the highest standards of business practice and that serve the best interests of independent higher education. CIC reserves the right to terminate a sponsor relationship at CIC's own discretion.

### ***Elements of Sponsorship***

These sponsorship relationships:

- facilitate interaction between representatives of sponsoring companies and college and university leaders,
  - make expertise available to college and university leaders and to CIC, and
  - provide financial resources for CIC programs and services.
1. *Interaction.* Sponsorship provides opportunities for representatives of companies offering products and services and for leaders of colleges and universities to learn more about each other. At CIC conferences, sponsors' representatives participate fully in the event, including most program sessions and special events such as trips or dinners. Because it is important that presidents feel comfortable enough to be candid in their comments and because the time allotted for questions is limited, CIC asks that sponsors refrain from speaking publicly in plenary and concurrent sessions. CIC conferences do not have a separate exhibition room. Indeed, most sponsors do not have displays, but several companies—paying larger sponsor fees—are eligible to set up tables. Sponsors at or above the \$10,000 level may request a mailing list of member institutions from CIC once each year for one-time use.

In general, individuals representing sponsors have appreciated the professional development purposes of CIC events and have refrained from overzealous promotion of their own products or services either at the event or afterward. The mutual interaction helps to monitor this tone; at a recent Presidents Institute, for example, a company was able to learn of negative presidential reactions to their distribution of promotional materials to registrants' hotel rooms.

The growth of electronic media has added a means for sponsors to communicate with college presidents. Despite the ease of using this method of reaching presidents, CIC expects sponsors not to send mass emails that promote the sponsors' participation in the Presidents Institute or the sponsors' products and services to college presidents in advance of the Presidents Institute.

For the Presidents Institute, there is a limit of 50 sponsoring organizations to ensure an appropriate balance of participation between college and university presidents and representatives of sponsors. Most companies renew their sponsorships annually, but each year there are a few opportunities for new companies to become sponsors. In selecting new sponsors, CIC tries to ensure that a range of companies serving higher education is represented—both generally and within particular functional areas (such as fundraising or food services).

2. *Expertise.* Individuals from sponsoring organizations are also an excellent source of valuable knowledge and information for CIC and its members, and CIC events make use of this expertise in several ways. For example, CIC occasionally invites individuals from sponsoring companies to participate as presenters in program sessions. It is important to note that these invitations are based entirely on presidential programmatic interest and company expertise, not on level or longevity of sponsorship. CIC uses two entirely different processes to invite individuals to make presentations on programs and companies to be sponsors of those programs. There are no sponsor-organized sessions for which the sponsor selects the content and speakers, and CIC does not guarantee a position on the program as a condition of sponsorship.

CIC's sponsorship program provides college presidents and other representatives easy access to business partners with whom they consult for institutional advice and introduces presidents to new products and services. To facilitate valuable interaction between institutions and sponsors, CIC makes a directory of company representatives available at the conferences. Finally, CIC staff is able to suggest name of sponsors when institutional leaders are seeking help in a specific functional area.

3. *Financial Resources.* Sponsorships for CIC programs and services provide financial resources that increase the quality of those CIC initiatives. Annually, CIC receives approximately 20 percent of its operating revenue from these sponsorships. Currently, CIC accepts sponsorships for the annual Presidents Institute, Institute for Chief Academic Officers, Department/Division Chair Workshops, and College Media Conference. CIC includes the name of the sponsoring companies in a variety of promotional and program materials about CIC events, and representatives of sponsoring companies are invited to be full participants in the events their company is sponsoring.

### ***Conflict of Interest***

There is increased sensitivity to the perception of any possible conflict of interest—either realizing inappropriate personal benefit or establishing inappropriate organizational relationships. At CIC events, sponsors may offer only gifts of token value (such as dinners) to individual institutional leaders. CIC staff decline even those invitations.

CIC is pleased and honored by the confidence of so many companies in their relations with CIC, and we look forward to continuing these partnerships that serve to strengthen independent higher education in ways that would not otherwise be possible.

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