

10 February 2012

UTMB Office of Institutional Compliance
Sent via email to: instcomp@utmb.edu

Cc: See list below

Dear Sir/Madame:

Re: CEHD - Conflict of Interest?

Your web site states:

“The term “conflict of interest” refers to situations in which financial or other personal considerations may directly and significantly affect, or have the appearance of directly and significantly affecting a covered individual’s professional judgment in exercising any UTMB duty or responsibility or in the conducting or reporting of any type of research.”

While it is certainly common practice for academics to accept grants or other forms of payment to do research, the public can always hope that their findings are not colored by who is paying them. The Center to Eliminate Health Disparities at UTMB is currently operating under a grant of approximately **\$96,500**, from the Galveston Housing Authority (GHA), **to support the mixed-income development plan promoted by McCormick, Baron and Salazar** (MBS) that has been rejected by the City Council and most of the people who live in this city.

The staff at CEHD are not only functioning as paid consultants, but their performance at the 12 January City Council meeting was much more like a team of lobbyists or public relations agents

promoting mixed-income development for GHA and MBS. To make matters worse, they did NOT disclose their financial arrangement with GHA to the City Council, and the people of the City, but instead, 3 out of the 4 of them, said they were there to present their own personal opinion!

The CEHD staff spoke on matters such as costs to local government, economic development, job creation, and supporting a local retirement community; issues that would seem to be far outside of the realm of their expertise! One of them even said that Low-Income Tax Credits would be good for public health; truly a stretch! In fact, **their script sounded like it could have been written by McCormick, Baron and Salazar, GHA's master developer**; the party that has the most to gain from the position being peddled by CEHD.

CEHD's activities would certainly be "questionable" even if they were working on behalf of a developer in some other part of the country, but they are truly outrageous in their own "home town" where **their actions will have a very detrimental effect on the City of Galveston, and are certain to strain relations between the residents of the City and UTMB.**

Therefore, the Galveston Open Government Project formally requests that you investigate the apparent **conflict of interest in the lobbying and public relations efforts by CEHD** on behalf of GHA and MBS, and hopes that you will put the brakes on it.

Video of 12 January City Council meeting:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=5q1tDsleDkE

Respectfully submitted,

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