

Ethics Scenario

Dr. Proton, a tenured professor of physics, has heard the administration's call for greater entrepreneurial activity among faculty. The university budget is under pressure and no salary increases are on the horizon.

Dr. Proton, in his laboratory, has determined that he must develop a method of cold fusion. He can use it to supplement his meager salary, provide a great service to the world, and keep his supervisor off his back.

Dr. Proton contacts his chair, Dr. Know. Dr. Know reminds Dr. Proton that the *Faculty Manual* provides that he can engage in consulting up to one day per week and that he should read the *Faculty Manual* provisions related to ethics. Dr. Know also tells him to call Dr. Keen, Director of Research, to discuss the rules for entrepreneurial activity.

Dr. Proton talks with Dr. Keen about his proposal to develop a cold fusion company. Dr. Proton tells Dr. Keen that he will need to use university laboratories, university graduate students, and his office assistant to start this new consulting business. Dr. Keen is quite busy and he simply tells Dr. Proton to come up with a plan to submit for review.

Dr. Proton comes up with the following plan:

- (1) He will create a company called: FusionIsMe, Inc.
- (2) He will be the CEO of FusionIsMe.
- (3) He will use his laboratory in Keller Hall to do his research and development but only on weekends and evenings to avoid conflicting with normal university activities.
- (4) He will offer to employ his graduate students to assist him on weekends and evenings.
- (5) He will employ his office assistant to schedule meetings and prepare documents in her free time.
- (6) He will use his university-issued laptop computer for this work, but will have a special place for his FusionIsMe files.
- (7) He will contact his local state representative to ask him for legislation to fund his critically important work on cold fusion.
- (8) As he is quite busy, Dr. Proton will simply use his WSU email account to send messages to legislators and potential business investors; after all, he does not expect that he will be sending very many email messages. His office issued cell phone will also be used minimally for FusionIsMe.
- (9) Naturally, Dr. Proton expects that by using his WSU title on his FusionIsMe, Inc. business cards, it will give him extra clout with potential investors.
- (10) Dr. Proton also hopes to obtain startup money for his new venture by earning honoraria.

Review each point above. You (group's designee acting as Chair Dr. Know) and Dr. Proton will be meeting with the Dean to discuss.