Federal Advisory Committee Act: Member Roles and Ethical Considerations

The Science Advisory Board for the Office of Justice Programs

March 28, 2017
FAC Purpose

• Federal Advisory Committees (FAC) are established to help inform federal policy, programs

• FACs assemble individuals with diverse expertise, experience, backgrounds
Member Roles

• Advisory Committee is to provide advice on social science and statistics to the Assistant Attorney General of OJP

• Advice should help OJP enhance its overall impact and performance of its programs by assisting OJP’s adherence to the highest levels of scientific rigor.
Member Roles

• Conduct hearings to gather information on the scientific soundness of OJP programs and the impact of OJP’s research, statistics and grant programs.

• Serve as a base of contact with the academic and practitioner communities.

• Science Advisor Board is independent, but operates through Designated Federal Official.
Ethical Considerations

• Access to OJP staff and non-public information

• Conflict of interest is a major concern
  – Personal conflicts
  – Organizational conflicts
  – Family conflicts

• Generally may not accept gifts
Ethical Considerations

• Think general vs. specific recommendations

• Specific recommendations require financial disclosure forms

Overall: Avoid taking positions that look as if any particular organization or individual is being favored
Lobbying

• 2002 anti-lobbying statute expanded lobbying restrictions to state/local/tribal governments, all grantees and FAC members

• Federally registered lobbyists are prohibited from serving on FACs
Scenario #1

An OJP witness is about to testify before the Advisory Committee concerning problems with a particular research project. Immediately before s/he begins to testify, you remember that the project is funded by OJP and operated by your employer. What should you do? Discuss.
Additional Guidance

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