Cornell University Policy 4.14 identifies what constitutes a conflict of interest and/or commitment for faculty and staff and how these conflicts are to be managed. The following are excerpted from Policy 4.14:

A conflict of interest arises when an individual has an existing or potential significant financial interest or other material interest or relationship that impairs or might appear to impair the individual’s independence and objectivity in the discharge of his or her responsibilities to the university.

A conflict of commitment arises when an individual undertakes external commitments that may burden or interfere with primary obligations and commitments to Cornell.

An academic staff member who accepts a full-time appointment has a primary commitment that generally includes teaching classes, being available to students and colleagues outside the classroom, serving departmental, college, and university committees, providing clinical services (where applicable), conducting research, publishing scholarly works, and otherwise meeting the changing needs of the university. Those holding Cooperative Extension or clinical appointments have specified obligations of service to the public. Such an appointment constitutes a full-time obligation to the university, and, with the exceptions explicitly permitted by university policies on consulting and other related professional activities, full-time faculty members must not engage in other employment.

Upon full reporting, the university may approve a transaction or affiliation, provided that the conflict can be managed. In many cases, the conflict can be managed through disclosure. In some cases, the individual may be required to report on the conflict annually. The university will disapprove the transaction or affiliation if a conflict of interest is involved that cannot be managed.

Situations where an individual, while serving in a position at Cornell, is concurrently engaged to teach a course or otherwise make a substantial contribution to the instruction or educational services offered by another entity. Instructional activities performed in the course of a dean-approved faculty sabbatic plan are not meant to be covered by this example, nor are instructional activities conducted for a subsidiary of the university. These activities are routinely subject to reporting and approval processes.

Cornell University policy states that teaching at other institutions is inherently a conflict and requires prior disclosure, approval and management. University policy also states that if those charged to manage a conflict consider it unmanageable, a
decision can be made to prohibit the activities that generate the conflict. Following consultation with the Senior Vice Provost and legal counsel, CALS prohibits full time faculty teaching semester-long courses at other institutions. Excluded from this prohibition are faculty participation as guest lectures, short courses offered during between semester breaks, courses offered during the summer, and instructional activities performed in the course of a dean-approved faculty sabbatic plan.