Beneficial new treatments and research from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine make a world of difference to health care providers, business interests, and a watchful public. Through integration of technology transfer, research administration, and conflict-of-interest management, the University works to maintain an untainted balance between commercializing its discoveries and maintaining its academic integrity. The School of Medicine plays an essential and multifaceted role in the reformation of Northeast Ohio into a medical and biotechnological powerhouse. The School attracts and retains world-class faculty, researchers, and students, who collaborate with physicians at the forefront of clinical care. Patients from around the world visit School of Medicine faculty members for treatment and participation in potentially life-saving clinical trials. Facilitated by a powerful technology transfer process, the School's most groundbreaking discoveries are reaching a growing audience and are resulting in transformative health care benefits.

Illustrations are examples of noninvasive electrocardiographic imaging (ECGI), including epicardial potentials, arranged in an Andy Warhol-like grid painting.
those conflicts appropriately, which is what we all strive to do, accrues benefit to society, Case Western Reserve implements a unique strategy that administers the institution and its individual members.

president for research administration at Case Western Reserve. He says embracing one’s conflicts of interest and finding solutions that are individualized to the specific situation, and guided by a balanced approach, is key to achieving success.

Mr. Edwards is chair of the Outside Interests Committee, formerly the Conflicts of Interests Committee, whose role is to develop a comprehensive plan to manage the conflict resolves it. I feel strongly that scientific data keeps me objective. The data is the data, and I don’t worry about anything else.”

Dr. Duerk explains, "Management of the conflict involves a plan to assure full disclosure of how I divide my time and maintain my scientific integrity." Dr. Duerk believes that part of his role as a professor is to help the next generation of investigators understand conflicts of interest. “In teaching, we have an opportunity to involve students in business-related issues, and they are intrigued to learn about consulting, or patent preparation, or to speak with CEOs,” he says, “but it is important that they understand dual roles and potential conflicts.” Mahmood A. Ghannoum, Ph.D., E.M.B.A., is another entrepreneur who emerged in the business world in part because of Case Western Reserve’s technology transfer process. A professor in the Department of Dermatology, director of the Center for Medical Mycology, and co-director of the Skin Diseases Research Center, Dr. Ghannoum is also a founder of Great Lakes Pharmaceuticals and is its chief scientific officer. His company focuses on research and development of products for prevention of microbial infections. "I was doing clinical translational research and discovered a way to inhibit pathogen-related infections. I had no thought to commercial interests, but Joe Jankowski saw the potential, and we started to work together, which resulted in the formation of the company," Dr. Ghannoum says. "Of course, now there is a conflict of interest among my various roles, but disclosure and a comprehensive plan to manage the conflict resolves it. I feel strongly that scientific data keeps me objective. The data is the data, and I don’t worry about anything else.”

Dr. Duerk says it is the responsibility of today’s researchers to remain open to opportunities to bring transformative products into commercial development, where they can ultimately provide the most benefit to the most people. "Faculty have conflicts it’s a way to validate that others find what they are doing useful," he says, “We have a responsibility to the community to make our research and technology available."