



University Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

University of Central Florida Draft Policy Submission Cover Memo Form

Policy No. and Title:

Initiating Authority:

Initiating Authority Approval Date:

Date of Submission for Review:

Submitted by:

Department:

New Policy

Existing Policy (5-year Review)

Existing Policy (Out of Cycle
Review)

Summary of Revisions: (For a new policy, please provide a summary of the policy. For an existing policy, please provide a summary of the revisions made to the policy.)

Stakeholders included in the Review Process: (Provide a list of departments involved in the review/revision process.)

Stakeholder feedback must also be requested from the [Faculty Senate](#) and the [College Policy Liaisons](#). By checking the boxes below, you are confirming that feedback from these groups was requested, received, and considered in the draft policy.

College Policy Liaisons

Faculty Senate

Regulatory Requirements (if applicable): (Provide information on regulatory requirements pertaining to the policy, including specific statute or regulation number.)

Presenters: (Provide the name(s), position title(s), and email address(s) for all individuals who will be presenting the policy to the university's Policies and Procedures Committee.)



Draft - Political and Campaign Activities

Policy Number	2-600.42
Responsible Authority	Vice President for Government and Community Relations
Initiating Authority	Vice President for Government and Community Relations
Effective Date	
Date of Origin	3/19/2008

APPLICABILITY/ACCOUNTABILITY

This policy applies to all employees and, in limited situations as noted, students of the University of Central Florida. It is consistent with federal, state, and other laws that pertain to political and campaign activities on university-owned, -occupied, or -controlled lands and buildings located within the state of Florida.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As a state university, it is imperative that UCF maintain its integrity and credibility in the public forum. This is particularly true of the political process and the manner in which UCF university employees affect or are affected by activities such as lobbying, holding public office, or engaging in other political activities.

UCF faculty, staff and students may be asked by political candidates or campaigns to distribute campaign literature, post campaign signs, to join a candidate on campus for campaigning or to help organize a campaign event. Faculty, staff and students may also become a candidate for elected office.

Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code prohibits UCF, as a tax-exempt entity, from participating or intervening in political campaign activities in support of or opposition to, candidates for elective office. This policy addresses specific aspects of political activity involving actual or perceived university endorsements, campaign events, testifying before a governmental entity, running for public office and participating in appointed public service.

POLICY STATEMENT

As individuals, UCF employees are encouraged to support candidates or issues of their choice and participate in the democratic process as a privilege of citizenship, but they must not in any way associate these activities as formal representation or endorsement by the university which would violate state law and endanger the tax exempt status of UCF's affiliated organizations.

Prohibited Political Activities

UCF employees are prohibited from taking an active part in a political campaign while on duty or within periods of time during which university employees are expected to be performing services for which the employee receives compensation from the university. As work time expectations are varied among UCF employees, a presumption of adherence to this policy may be made when an employee engages in political activities when not located on UCF-owned or controlled facilities and when not utilizing UCF equipment, materials, supplies, services, or the like.

UCF employees are prohibited from using the authority of their university position to secure support for, or oppose any candidate, party, or issue in a partisan election or affect the results of such election. Similarly, UCF employees are prohibited from using a promise of reward, threat to encourage, and/or coerce any other University personnel to support or contribute to any political issue, candidate, or party.

Florida law prohibits making, soliciting, or accepting political contributions (whether monetary or otherwise) on UCF owned or controlled property, unless the space is rented for the specific purpose of holding a campaign fundraiser, on the same terms available to any member of the public under applicable use policies for the facility.

Use of State Resources

Current state laws and regulations prohibit state employees from using state resources to participate in political campaigns or activities, including lobbying and political solicitation of any kind. Renting UCF facilities for campaign-related events, on the same terms available to any member of the public under applicable use policies for that facility may be permissible, provided that campaign fundraising does not occur under any circumstances.

Examples of prohibited uses of state resources would include, but not be limited to, such activities as soliciting or accepting political contributions in a UCF facility, sending out a campaign mailing using university stationery or postage purchased by the university, using the official UCF email system or email list or listserv for the purpose of supporting or opposing a political candidate or ballot initiative, and using UCF property and resources to display or reproduce material supporting or opposing a political candidate or ballot initiative.

Activities Potentially Perceived as Official University Endorsements

Student organizations or activity groups associated with various academic programs cannot participate in campaign activities even if participation is in-kind or reimbursed for actual expenses. For example, it is not appropriate for a UCF music group to display the UCF name while performing at a campaign rally.

The use of or location of any UCF logos, branding, and signage may be reasonably construed to communicate an endorsement. Additionally, sharing or re-posting content on or from an official UCF website or social media site may likewise reasonably be interpreted as an endorsement.

Candidates on Campus

Political candidates and their staff or supporters and political organizations are always welcome on campus for tours, briefings, or other related activities, but UCF will not officially sponsor a politically partisan rally or fundraiser. Registered student organizations may invite candidates or sponsor such activities provided they follow prescribed procedure for use of university space. Facilities owned or controlled by UCF, or any affiliated organizations, may be rented for use by political parties and candidates in accordance with applicable regulations and policies.

The Office of Government and Community Relations is always willing to assist, as appropriate, depending upon scheduling and availability of staff and facilities, but under no circumstances is the university responsible for generating press coverage or soliciting attendance at such events.

Further guidance should be sought from the Office of the General Counsel and the Office of Government and Community Relations.

Generally Permissible Activities - Examples

While UCF faculty, staff, and students are prohibited from using state resources to engage in political activities for or against a candidate or ballot initiative, these activities are **permissible when faculty, staff, and students are engaging personally, as individuals on their own time**, provided they do not use university resources and do not say or imply they are acting on behalf of UCF:

- Making monetary donations **off of UCF-owned or controlled property** to support or oppose a political candidate or ballot initiative.
- Acting as a volunteer by writing letters, making phone calls, knocking on doors, or distributing flyers in support of or opposition to a political candidate or ballot initiative.
- Organizing or attending rallies in support of or opposition to a political candidate or ballot initiative.
- Writing letters to the editor or op-ed pieces supporting or opposing a political candidate or ballot initiative.
- Giving speeches and participating in debates for or against a political candidate or ballot initiative.
- Writing to elected officials to express personal opinions on a political candidate or ballot initiative.
- Renting UCF facilities to outside parties or university organizations for campaign-related events, pursuant to applicable use policies and subject to the usual and normal charge for that facility, such as a candidate forum or panel, a debate or a town hall event.
- Renting UCF facilities for campaign-related events, on the same terms available to any member of the public under applicable use policies for that facility.

University activities in which faculty, staff, and students **may generally properly engage** under the law, **even if public resources are used**:

- Conducting scholarly research on the effects of a ballot initiative or political issue on UCF, the state, the economy, etc.
- Disseminating the results of scholarly research on a ballot initiative or political issue in academic journals.
- Inviting sitting elected officials to UCF to engage with faculty, staff and/or students on issues which are not campaign related. It is a best practice not to schedule near an election when the elected official is an incumbent seeking reelection.
- Planning and holding academic conferences, forums, symposiums or panel discussions on campus, or inviting guest speakers (including, in some circumstances, candidates, so long as all sides are invited to participate) to discuss campaign-related issues (must not be for the purpose of influencing a vote in an election).
- Hosting candidate debates at which all qualified candidates for office are invited.
- Voter registration/education events not involving a campaign, political party, or group associated with a political preference or history of support for a particular political viewpoint.

Prohibited Political Activity – Examples

- Posting campaign signs and materials on UCF or UCF-controlled property.
- Engaging in campaigning or advocacy and/or distributing campaign literature on UCF-work time.
- Collecting campaign donations or contribution on campus.

Any campaign or advocacy activity which directly or indirectly gives the impression that UCF supports a particular candidate for office or ballot initiative.

DEFINITIONS

Candidate. Any individual who offers himself or herself, or is proposed by others, as a contestant for elective public office. It includes persons who have declared as intent to run for office, incumbents whose intent to run is presumed, and persons whose candidacy is the subject of public speculation.

Government entity. Any State, federal, or local governing or advisory body composed of elected or governmentally appointed officials, or any quasi-public body that holds recognized authority.

Political activities. Active campaigning or advocacy activities relating to candidates for public office as well as issues such as constitutional amendments, referenda, or other initiatives on a ballot.

Public office. An elective office on a local, state or national level. It also includes elected offices within political parties, such as local, state or national party chairs and committees.

PROCEDURES

Official University Positions

UCF cannot endorse or oppose any political candidate, party or position. The UCF Board of Trustees has designated the president of the university as its principal spokesperson and representative on all government relations matters with all levels of government. The president may delegate this authority as appropriate. In no case shall may a UCF n-employee of the university formally represent the president or the Board of Trustees without prior approval and delegation by the president.

Except in the case ~~that~~ of an employee is presenting research in their field of expertise, if an individual employee of the university who is not the president's designee is invited by any government entity to make a presentation or address an issue before it, the employee shall must clearly and publicly state that their comments are personal and not intended to represent the official views or position of UCF. No state resources may be used to support these activities unless approved by the president or designee in advance of the event.

Running for Public Office

University employees may run for public office or participate in appointed public service, but it is incumbent on the individual to demonstrate to their supervisor that no conflict of interest or conflict of commitment exists. -If the elected or appointed public position adversely affects the duties and responsibilities of the individual relative to the university, appropriate adjustment in compensation, length of contract, or prescribed duties shall be agreed to in writing and approved by the president or designee. The individual's immediate supervisor is responsible for any required written forms or approvals. In situations where the individual holding or running for public office would present a conflict of interest or interfere with the full discharge of their university duties, the individual may be required to take a leave of absence or resign employment with the university pursuant to Regulation UCF-3.018 Conflict of Interest or Commitment; Outside Activity or Employment. Candidates for public office may not use the services of any public official or employee during working hours in the furtherance of their campaigns and must follow all appropriate Florida elections laws.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

[Section 11.062, Florida Statutes, use of state funds for lobbying prohibited; penalty.](#)

[Section 104.31, Florida Statutes, Political activities of state, county, and municipal officers and employees.](#)

Section 112.313, Florida Statutes, Standards of conduct for officers and employees of entities serving as chief administrative officer of political subdivisions.

Regulation UCF-3.018 Conflict of Interest or Commitment; Outside Activity or Employment

Regulation UCF-4.029 Use of University Facilities; Definitions; Priority of Use; Restrictions on Use; Events and Protests

Regulation UCF-4.0293 Use of University Grounds by the Campus Community; Campus Demonstrations and Outdoor Events

Regulation UCF-4.0294 Use of University Facilities; General Requirements

History:

3/19/2008 2-600; 2-600.1 5/14/2020