

**Responsible Executive:** Board of Trustees  
**Approving Official:** Board of Trustees  
**Effective Date:** September 19, 2008  
**Revision History:** New, 9-19-2008

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

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

## **II. POLICY**

### **DEFINITIONS:**

**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.

**University:** The Florida State University, its Board of Trustees; all employees, including faculty, staff, agents, and contractors while engaged in work for the University; students: all campuses, facilities, and instructional centers, wherever located.

### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

#### **General**

Every member of the University community has a right to participate or not, as he or she sees fit, whether off duty and in his or her individual capacity, in the political process. However, current state laws and regulations prohibit state employees from using state resources, including, but not limited to, using state property, information technology (e.g., email, websites, listserv. etc.), materials, supplies or equipment in connection with political campaigns or activities, including lobbying and political solicitation of any kind. As individuals, Florida State University employees are encouraged to support candidates or issues of their choice and participate in the democratic process as a privilege of citizenship. As an institution, Florida State University may not participate or intervene in any political campaign for public office.

No member of the Florida State University community shall speak or act in the name of the University in a political campaign or legislative activity. Those who, in their official capacity, speak for the University, must make it clear when expressing individual views that they do not in any way associate these activities as formal representation or endorsement by the University. The use of any institutional mark, insignia, seals and stationary is prohibited as well. However, wearing of political lapel buttons is acceptable, but not advised when performing official University functions, i.e. teaching class, presiding over a meeting, representing the University at conferences, etc. Bumper stickers on personal vehicles are fine, but prohibited on University owned or leased vehicles. Employees may reasonably display partisan political signs, photos, and posters in their individual workspace or office, provided they do not create a hostile work environment, or otherwise impair or disrupt University

operation s. Employees are cautioned, however, that such displays must not violate Section 104.31, Florida Statutes (Political Activities of State, County, and Municipal Officers and Employees) or Section 110.233 (Political Activities and Unlawful Acts Prohibited), or both. Such displays should not be made in a manner that would lead a reasonable person to conclude that the display reflects an official position of the University.

### **Students**

Recognized student organizations on campus may sponsor candidates, political and/or voter activities in specified areas at the university by following all applicable rules, regulations, policies and laws pertaining to facilities, postings and organization registration requirements as outlined. However, 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 an FSU music group to display the FSU name or otherwise advertise or state its affiliation with the University while performing at a campaign rally.

### **Elected Officials on Campus**

Florida State University welcomes visits by elected officials and their staffs, whether they visit as private citizens or in their capacities as government officials. Invitations to elected officials to visit any campus of Florida State University in their official capacity are to be coordinated and approved in advance with the Office of Governmental Relations.

FSU will neither host nor sponsor a political rally or fundraiser and under no circumstances is the University responsible for generating press coverage or soliciting attendance at such events.

### **Academic Freedom**

There is no restriction on discussion of political issues or teaching of political techniques. Academic endeavors which address public policy issues are in no way affected by this policy.

### **PROCEDURES:**

The President of the University is designated 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 an employee of the University formally represent the President or Board of Trustees without prior approval and delegation by the President. If an individual employee of the University who is not the President's designee is invited by any government entity to address an issue before it, the employee shall publically clarify that his or her response and participation is not necessarily the formal position of the President or the Board of Trustees. No state resources may be used to support these activities unless approved by the President or his/her designee in advance of the event.

University employees may run for public office or participate in appointed public service, but it is incumbent upon the individual to demonstrate to his/her university supervisor that no conflict of interest or conflict of commitment exists. The employee must conduct all campaign-related activities on his/her own time and without the use of institutional resources and technology. If the elected or appointed public position adversely affects the duties and responsibilities of the individual relative to the University, appropriate adjustments in compensations, length of contract, or prescribed duties shall be agreed to in writing and approved by the President or his/her designee. The individual's immediate supervisor shall be responsible for any required written forms or approvals.

### **III. LEGAL SUPPORT, JUSTIFICATION, AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY**

Amendment I, United States Constitution

Florida Statutes: Section 11.062, F.S.; Section 104.31, F.S.; Section

106.15, F.S.; Section 110.233 FSU Regulation FSU-2.007, Use of Campus Facilities

FSU Regulation FSU-3.003, Students Freedom of Expression, Rights and Responsibilities

FSU IT Policy, Electronic Mail and Electronic Communications

Board of Governors Regulation. 5.945, Employee Ethical Obligations and Conflicts of Interest

JRS Rule 115, Public Institutions