



MEMORANDUM

To: University System Presidents, VPAAAs, VPSAs, CBOs, CHROs, and Legal Affairs
From: USG Office of Legal Affairs
Date: February 16, 2024
Subject: Policy Guidance on Political Activity

This memorandum serves as USG Legal Affairs' periodic guidance regarding free expression and political activity in the University System of Georgia (USG). With the approach of the 2024 primary and general elections, we are providing this guidance to summarize questions that we often receive during campaign season about certain USG policies related to political activity. Please share this information with your campus communities.

Employee Expression of Political Opinions – BOR Policy 8.2.18.3

The USG respects the free expression rights of USG employees to share their personal views on political issues. Sharing these personal political views must be done only in an employee's personal capacity and in a manner that does not interfere with work or involve improper use of state resources. Likewise, USG employees must not hold themselves out as speaking or acting on behalf of the USG or its institutions when participating in political activities. Employees must also take reasonable measures to avoid any appearance that the individual employee's participation is in an official capacity as an employee of the USG or its institutions.

USG employees are not prohibited from noting in a biographical description their employment status, title, affiliation with the USG or their institution, or their background and credentials, but if an employee does so, the employee must make it clear when expressing personal political views that the employee is not speaking in the employee's capacity as an employee of the USG or the employee's institution. Employees may not use state resources (including work email) or work time to communicate these personal political views. In addition, employees are prohibited from using any USG registered trademarks when expressing personal opinions on political issues, unless they are expressly authorized to do so.

Employee Involvement in Political Campaigns – BOR Policy 8.2.18.3

Individuals may not hold elective political office at the state or federal level while employed by the USG. Any employee seeking federal or state elective office must notify his or her direct supervisor and request a leave of absence without pay prior to qualifying as a candidate.

Employees are also prohibited from managing or taking an active part in political campaigns during work hours or where such involvement would otherwise interfere with work responsibilities. Under no circumstances may employees use any state property, resources, or materials in conjunction with any political campaigning.

Use of Institution Facilities in Political Campaigns – BOR Policy 6.14.1

During campaign season, political candidates often seek to engage in campaign activities on USG campuses. Under BOR Policy 6.14.1, the President of each institution may authorize the use of institution



UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

Legal Affairs

270 Washington Street, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

PHONE (404) 962-3255
FAX (404) 962-3264
USG-LEGAL@USG.EDU

facilities for political speeches; however, these speech events must be sponsored by recognized organizations of the institution and can be held only at places designated by the President. At no time can USG materials, supplies, equipment, machinery, or vehicles be used in political campaigns. This includes the use of student activity fee funding allocated to a registered organization to pay event space fees for a political campaign event or other campaign expenses.

* * *

Thank you for all you do on behalf of student education and success in Georgia and for your attention to this guidance as we begin a new campaign season. Should you have any questions about this guidance or wish to discuss it further, please contact the USG Office of Legal Affairs at 404-962-3255.