



**COMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE, GOVERNMENT
RELATIONS, AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS
ACTION ITEM GGRIA5
December 4, 2025**

SUBJECT: Policy on Institutional Neutrality

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The University of Florida is committed to fostering an environment of free expression, academic freedom, and open inquiry. To support this environment, the University maintains institutional neutrality on political, social, and other issues not directly related to its mission, governance, or operations. A policy is proposed to clarify expectations regarding and ensure compliance with institutional neutrality.

PROPOSED COMMITTEE ACTION

The Committee on Governance, Government Relations and Internal Affairs is asked to recommend for approval by the BOT a proposed Policy on Institutional Neutrality and include the policy in the Appendix to the Board's Governance Standards.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE CONSIDERATIONS

None.

Supporting Documentation Included: Proposed Policy on Institutional Neutrality

Submitted by: Ryan Fuller, Vice President and General Counsel

Approved by the University of Florida Board of Trustees, December 5, 2025

Morteza "Mori" Hosseini, Chair

Donald Landry, Interim President and Corporate Secretary

Policy Number: 11-038

Title: Institutional Neutrality

Category: Human Resources

Responsible Executive: Vice President for Human Resources

Responsible Office: Human Resources

1. Purpose

The University of Florida (UF) is committed to fostering an environment of free expression, academic freedom, and open inquiry. Proclamations from UF institutional and unit leadership on issues that polarize society impair the free and open exchange of differing ideas on campus as it divides the student body and faculty into those aligned with leadership and those opposed. To prevent this and support free and open exchange, UF maintains institutional neutrality on political, social, and other issues not directly related to its mission, governance, or operations.

This policy clarifies expectations regarding (1) leadership commentary and proclamations on Social Issues; (2) the use of Communication Resources for personal expression; and (3) representations of affiliation.

2. Applicability

This policy applies to UF employees and individuals who have access to, operate or maintain any Communication Resources for the purpose of engaging in University Business.

3. Definitions

Communication.Resources means those communication assets, properties, systems, processes, and structures owned, operated or otherwise controlled by UF, and provided for the purpose of conducting and communicating University Business, including but not limited to:

- UF email systems
- Email signature blocks
- Email listservs and distribution lists
- UF websites and webpages
- UF social media accounts
- Messaging and shared systems platforms
- Teleconference and videoconference systems

Social.Issues means topics that polarize or divide society among political, ideological, moral, or religious beliefs.

University.Business means those activities, communications, transactions, or functions that are conducted by or on behalf of UF in the course of fulfilling its mission, operations, or official responsibilities. University Business includes, but is not limited to:

- Instructional Activities
- Research and Scholarship
- Administrative Functions
- Communications
- Sponsored or Funded Activities
- UF Events and Representation
- Authorized UF government relations and lobbying activities
- Guidance regarding or requiring compliance with laws, regulations or policies

University Business does not include personal endeavors, private consulting, political or social advocacy, student academic activities or other activities undertaken in an individual capacity.

4. Policy Statement

4.1 Personals and Academic Expression

Individuals retain the right to engage in personal expression in their private capacities, provided they do not use UF's Communication Resources or state or imply UF endorsement. Individuals also retain the right to engage in and utilize Communication Resources for bona fide academic discussion, research, or teaching on political or social topics.

4.2 Maintaining Institutional Neutrality

In conducting their University Business, UF institutional and unit leadership teams may not make statements or proclamations regarding Social Issues or other issues not directly related to UF's mission, governance, or operations. The authority to make any such statement or proclamation is limited to the President in consultation with the Board Chair.

4.3 Use of Communication Resources for Personal Expression Prohibited

UF's Communication Resources are for conducting University Business. Employees and other individuals granted access to Communication Resources for the purpose of

conducting University Business may not use Communication Resources to engage in personal expression.¹

4.4 Examples of Policy Application to Communication Resources

- Email Signature Blocks: Information contained in email signature blocks is limited to UF's [Email Signature Standards](#) and any University Business related notice or disclaimer authorized by a unit leader.
- Email Listservs and Distribution Lists: Use of UF listservs and distribution lists is limited to University Business that unit leaders specifically authorize to be communicated through listservs and distribution lists.
- Websites and Webpages: Use of UF websites and webpages is limited to University Business. Information about employee professional qualifications and experience related to their UF employment is considered University Business.
- Social Media: Use of UF social media accounts is limited to University Business. Personal social media accounts are not governed by this policy unless the account purports to represent or speak on behalf of UF.
- Teleconference and Videoconference Systems: When representing UF in online meetings, classes, or events, participants may use UF-provided backgrounds or other backgrounds that do not constitute Political or Social Activism.

4.5 Review and Adjudication

The following is the department, office, or individual responsible for overseeing implementation of and assuring compliance with this policy. Any individual with questions about the policy should contact:

UFHR – Employee Relations
903 W. University Avenue
PO Box 115000
Gainesville, FL 32611
(352) 392-1072

EmployeeRelations@hr.ufl.edu (to expedite a response, please include the phrase “Institutional Neutrality” in the subject line of any email inquiries or reports)

¹ This policy is not intended to prohibit incidental personal use of email permitted under UF's [Acceptable Use Policy](#). For example, an employee may use UF email to send a message to a colleague inviting them to lunch or regarding a birthday, graduation or other personal occasion or milestone.

4.6 Policy Violations

Failure to comply with this policy could result in disciplinary action, up to, and including, termination.

5. References and Related Information

[Acceptable Use Policy](#)

[Email Signature Standards](#)

[Freedom of Expression Statement](#)

[Social Media Policy](#)

[Political Activity Policy](#)

[Web Standards](#)

[BOG Regulation 9.016 - Prohibited Expenditures](#)

[Florida Statutes Section 1004.06 - Prohibited Expenditures](#)

History

New 12-04-25 (BOT Approval)