



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA BOARD OF TRUSTEES POLICY

Institutional Neutrality

POLICY STATEMENT:

To preserve free inquiry and open debate, the University of Central Florida maintains Institutional Neutrality: UCF does not take institutional positions on matters outside its core mission.

The University and its colleges, schools, departments, centers, institutes, offices, and direct support organizations shall not issue public statements in the University's name on contentious political or social issues unless the issue bears materially and directly on the University's core mission, as defined below.

Background

The University of Central Florida is a public institution serving the State of Florida and dedicated to advancing knowledge through teaching, research, and service. That mission requires an environment where the University community may pursue open inquiry, rigorous debate, and free exchange of ideas without having to reconcile their own conclusions with an official University position. When the University speaks officially on a contested political or social issue outside its core functions, it may signal a preferred view, chill contrary expression, and create the perception of viewpoint favoritism, regardless of intent.

This policy governs when the University may speak in its institutional capacity on matters of public concern. It does not restrict faculty academic freedom in teaching, research, or scholarship, or the personal free expression of faculty, staff, or students acting individually.

Institutional Neutrality

Institutional Neutrality applies to officers and leaders of the University and the University's direct support organizations, including Trustees and Directors, while acting in their official capacities. Institutional Neutrality also applies to the University's official communications platforms (e.g., UCF website, UCF webpages, and UCF social media accounts).

The University, the Board of Trustees, and any person purporting to speak in an official institutional capacity shall not issue an official statement taking a position on a contentious issue unless otherwise provided for or permitted by this policy. University

communication resources — email, websites, and official social media — are provided for University business and may not be used to issue an official statement in violation of this policy, though this does not limit incidental personal use of University email otherwise permitted under University policy.

This policy does *not* prohibit the University or an authorized representative from:

- Communicating on matters of University governance, academic policy, personnel, budget, or operations, even where such matters are publicly debated;
- Responding to emergencies or threats to the safety, health, or security of the University community;
- Complying with, or communicating about compliance with, federal or state law, a Board of Governors regulation, an accreditation requirement, a court order, or other legal obligation;
- Addressing or condemning unlawful conduct or violations of law or University policy, including unlawful discrimination or harassment;
- Engaging in government relations and advocacy directly related to the University's funding, legal authority, research enterprise, or operations; or
- Correcting factual misstatements made about the University itself.

Institutional Neutrality does not limit the communications of students, faculty and staff whether as private citizens or as academic professionals and learners, as applicable. UCF affirms its commitments to lawful free expression and academic freedom.

Institutional Spokespersons.

The President is the University's principal spokesperson on matters within the Core Mission and, in consultation with the Chair of the Board of Trustees, determines whether and how the University will address a matter otherwise subject to this policy. The Board speaks for the University on matters of governance within its authority.

Use of University Communication Resources. University email systems, websites, official social media accounts, listservs, and similar University-controlled communication channels are provided for University business. Use of these resources to make an official statement on a contentious issue in violation of this policy is prohibited.

Faculty governance bodies (including the Faculty Senate), and registered student organizations, including student government, should note that a given statement reflects their own view rather than an official position of the University.



DEFINITIONS

"Official statement" means a communication or statement made in the name of the University or the Board of Trustees, or in the name of a University direct support organization (DSO), through University (or DSO) communication resources or in an individual's official capacity, that a reasonable person would understand to represent the University's institutional position or that of one of its DSOs.

"Contentious issue" means a political, social, ideological, moral, or religious question that is the subject of substantial public disagreement and that does not directly and materially bear on the University's Core Mission.

Initiating Authority: UCF Board of Trustees

History: New 9-24-2026

Authority: *Florida Constitution, Article IX, Section 7; Sections 1001.706 and 1001.75, Florida Statutes; Board of Governors Regulations 1.001 and 1.002*