

304. Political Activities of University Personnel

1. Application of Rule

This rule and any guidelines which may be promulgated hereunder apply to all administrative officers, faculty, staff or other employees of The University of Alabama System.

2. Policy

The Board hereby reaffirms its historic position that the University shall neither endorse nor support any candidate for nomination or election to any public office of the State of Alabama or any other political entity. Employees of the University do not surrender their civil and political rights and responsibilities, however, by virtue of their employment. Indeed, the Board of Trustees encourages the officials and employees of the University to fulfill their civic responsibilities as private citizens. However, the Board shall continue to require that, consistent with state law, no University employee shall use or permit to be used University resources, time, or property for or on behalf of any political candidate, campaign, or organization or for any contribution or solicitation of any contribution to a political campaign or organization; nor shall any University employee lend or appear to lend the support of the University in connection with any contribution or solicitation of any contribution to a political campaign or organization. (Nothing in this rule, however, is intended to discourage the impartial use of University facilities as a public forum.)

The Board recognizes that it is often difficult for the public to distinguish between the public and private activities of University employees, particularly when those employees occupy senior administrative positions within the institution. For that reason and because the University is a public institution, the Board wishes to guard against those actions that are illegal and improper as well as those that may create the appearance of impropriety. It is incumbent upon employees of the University to make clear in any political activity whatsoever that they are acting in a private and individual capacity and that their activities have neither University sponsorship nor support. It is also incumbent upon employees of the University to avoid any private actions of a collective nature that may lend or appear to lend the support of the University to political activity. Because of their prominent identification with the institution, the major administrative officers of the University have a particularly heavy obligation to insure that their activities are not misinterpreted or misunderstood.

University employees interacting with Public Officials and representatives of either the federal, state, county, or municipal government, should take due care to observe and comply with applicable requirements of ethics and other laws that may govern such interactions.

3. Procedures for University Employees Who Seek or Hold Public Office

- a. No University employee may seek or hold public office and remain in the employ of the University if such activities could or would result in a conflict of interest or interfere with the employee's carrying out his or her University responsibilities.
- b. University employees who intend to seek election or re-election to public office, at the state, county, or municipal level, must first obtain written consent from his/her supervisor, the president of the applicable institution, and the Chancellor or his/her designee. In cases where the workload of the employee is the primary concern, Leaves of Absence during periods of running for office or serving in public office may be considered.
- c. University employees elected to or holding public office, at the state, county, or municipal level, must have a written Management Plan to assist in avoiding any conflict of interest or conflict of commitment. Such a plan should speak directly to any potential or perceived conflicts, including management of time, resources, and property. A written plan must be agreed to by the employee, his/her supervisor, the president, and the Chancellor or his/her designee.
- d. Copies of approvals pursuant to paragraph (b) and plans pursuant to paragraph (c) must be sent to the Chancellor or his/her designee to be maintained in a central location. A copy should also be maintained in the HR records of the employee.

3. Report to the Chancellor

If there exists a reasonable question whether a potential activity of a University employee is consistent with the policy of the Board on political activities of University personnel, the employee shall report the proposed activity to the Chancellor for approval through appropriate channels.

(Adopted August 23, 1978 as Rule 320; renumbered December 5, 1997; amended June 7, 2019.)