Information

Viewpoint Neutrality

Effective

June 26, 2025

Applicability

This policy applies to all members of the University community, including but not limited to members of the Board of Trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

Administrative Authority

Vice President for Risk, Audit, and Compliance

Responsible Unit

University Integrity and Compliance Office

215 Central Avenue, Suite 205

Phone: 502.852.5709

compliance@louisville.edu

History

This policy was approved by the Board of Trustees on June 26, 2025. Revisions to this policy were approved by the Board of Trustees on October 23, 2025.

Revision Date(s): October 23, 2025

Reviewed Date(s):

Categories

Statement:

As provided in Section 2.5.1 of the University Redbook, The University of Louisville Board of Trustees affirms the belief that "Membership in the academic community imposes on students, faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees of the University an obligation to adhere to standards of academic honesty, to respect the dignity of others, to acknowledge their right to express differing opinions, and to foster and defend intellectual honesty, freedom of inquiry and instruction, and free expression both on and off the campus." (UofL Redbook Sec. 2.5.1)

The University of Louisville does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's political or social viewpoint. Moreover, the University supports and promotes intellectual diversity within the University. No individual shall be required to endorse or condemn a specific ideology, political viewpoint, or social viewpoint to be eligible for hiring, contract renewal, tenure, promotion, admission, or graduation.

Members of the University community will not require any individual to support, condone, or condemn a specific ideology or viewpoint as a condition or factor of admission hiring, promotion, contract renewal, appointment, tenure award, or graduation. The University specifically prohibits discrimination on the basis of an individual's political or social viewpoint and/or the application of any ideological or political litmus test in student admissions decisions, employment decisions, promotion decisions, academic evaluations, appointment considerations, or degree conferrals.

Authority for Official University Statements and Positions

Official University Statements

Only the President has the authority and responsibility to issue Official Statements and communicate official positions on behalf of the University. The President may designate this authority in writing to specific individuals for narrowly defined purposes, occasions, and circumstances. All Official Statements and Positions must adhere to University neutrality standards and shall be expressly limited to matters directly related to the University's mission, operational objectives, or legal

obligations.

Board of Trustees Statements and Communications

The Chair of the University of Louisville Board of Trustees has the sole authority and responsibility to speak and/or issue statements on behalf of the Board of Trustees. The Board and the Board Chair shall adhere to the principle of Institutional Neutrality and shall not make any Official University Statement on political, social, or cultural matters that are not directly related to the University's mission, operational objectives, or legal obligations.

University Constituency Groups

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to constrict the ability of the Student Government Association, the Staff Senate, and the Faculty Senate, as core University stakeholders and essential participants in shared governance, to pass resolutions or otherwise represent their constituencies as long as they communicate that they are speaking for their specific constituency group and not on behalf of the University.

Free Speech and Personal Expression

Nothing in this policy is intended to impede the members of the University community in the exercise of their rights to free speech and the provisions of this policy should be interpreted consistent with the Campus Free Speech Protection Act, KRS 164.348, particularly as it relates to the rights of students. Subject to the guidelines of this policy, members of the University community have the freedom to participate in public service, political activity, and advocacy work in their private time and in their individual capacity.

Any expression made by a member of the University community as a private individual shall not give the impression of or purport to represent the University or any of its schools, units, departments, or affiliated organizations. Members of the University community shall observe the following guidelines in any public expression of their views as a private individual:

1. University e-mail accounts, social media accounts, or web addresses will not be used when issuing statements in a private capacity.

2. The University marks, logos, name, or associated images will not accompany private messages.
3. University web sites, signature lines, stationary, e-mail accounts, social media accounts, or web addresses shall not reference a private site, account, initiative, organization, or logo.
4. University logos, backdrops, signature lines, or stationary shall not be used for statements made in a private capacity.
5. When speaking at professional or academic meeting or conference, members of the University community shall clearly note that they are speaking in an individual capacity and do not represent the University.

Political Activity

While the University of Louisville fully respects the right and responsibility of University faculty, staff, and administrators to engage as private citizens in the political process on the local, state, and national level, the University prohibits the use of University resources or property to support or oppose a particular candidate or ballot initiative.

Examples of Impermissible use of University resources or property include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging in political activities on University property during regular University business hours or at official, University-sponsored events
- Engaging in political activity in an official capacity or when conducting instructional responsibilities
- Sending campaign correspondence using University stationary, computer, or electronic mail systems
- Using a University e-mail distribution list to campaign for or against a particular candidate, political party, or ballot initiative
- Using University equipment to create, copy, or distribute material to support or oppose a particular candidate, political party, or ballot initiative
- Using a University office, building, telephone, computer, e-mail address, web-conferencing service account, or meeting space to support or oppose a particular candidate, political party, or ballot initiative
- Unless specifically authorized by the University President, giving the appearance of speaking or campaigning on behalf of the University when supporting or opposing a particular political candidate, political party, or ballot

initiative.

Academic Freedom

This policy upholds and respects the University's commitment to academic freedom. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to constrict academic inquiry, classroom discussion, academic research, or academic debate within an appropriate educational or instructional context.

This policy shall be published in the University REDBOOK, student handbook, and faculty handbook and shall also be displayed on a prominent, publicly accessible page of the University's website.

REMEDIES AND ENFORCEMENT

Allegations of non-compliance with this Policy should be submitted to the University's Integrity and Compliance Office for appropriate routing and review.

Persons found to have violated the provisions set forth in this policy will be subject to disciplinary action and penalties as set forth in applicable University of Louisville Policies, including University HR Policies, the Faculty Accountability Policy, and the Code of Student Conduct. These penalties may include, but are not limited to, suspension, demotion, termination, or in the case of students, dismissal.

Related Information:

KRS 164.2896

The Redbook, Section 2.5.1

Definitions:

Institutional Neutrality

The University's commitment to refrain from taking an official position on political, cultural, or social matters that are not directly related to the University's mission, operational objectives, or legal obligations.

Official University Statement or Position

Any formal press release, resolution, social medial post, e-mail message, or public communication issued on behalf of the University of Louisville that purports to or gives the impression of representing the University or its Board of Trustees on any matter.

Political Activity

Supporting or opposing any partisan political party, candidate, ballot initiative, or activity. This definition includes campaign activity in favor of any candidate for local, state, or national office, including oneself. For purposes of this policy, this definition shall not include promoting or opposing a candidate for Student Government, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, or the University Board of Trustees. This definition shall not include activities authorized and initiated by the Office for External Relations.

University Property

Any real or personal property owned in which the University has a legal interest; any property, leased, or in any way controlled by the University.

University Resources

Any tangible or intangible University property, including, but not limited to, equipment, materials, supplies, devices, printers, copiers, software, licensing agreements, or human resources.