



MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Directors and Department Heads

FROM: Dan French, Senior Vice President and General Counsel
Kevin Quinn, Senior Vice President for Public Affairs

RE: Government Relations/Lobbying Laws, Policies and Compliance

DATE: October 2, 2014

This memorandum, distributed annually, provides guidance to all faculty and staff concerning laws, regulations, and University policies for engaging government officials and political candidates. In their roles as employees, all faculty and staff must comply with relevant ethics laws and regulations that affect how the University may interact with public officials at all levels of government.

Communicating with Public Officials

Because of its ongoing engagement with public officials and agencies to advance its mission, Syracuse University is a registered lobbying organization with both New York State and the federal government. Furthermore, as a tax-exempt organization, Syracuse University is prohibited from participating in any partisan political activities. The Office of Government and Community Relations is charged with advancing the University's interests at all levels of federal, state and local government and is the designated point of contact for government officials and their staff.

When acting in a capacity as a University employee, all employees must:

- Contact the Office of Government and Community Relations prior to contacting, communicating with, or visiting any official, staff member, or agency of the federal, state, and local governments.
- Contact the Vice President for Research regarding any contacts with government officials that pertain to sponsored research.
- Consult with the Office Government and Community Relations on any verbal or written communications made on behalf of the University that concern federal, state, or local policies, legislation, or regulations.
- Request authorization and assistance from the Office of Government and Community Relations prior to providing testimony or appearing before federal, state, or local government bodies.
- Coordinate all invitations to elected officials, their staff, or employees of governmental departments/agencies with the Office Government and Community Relations.

Lobbying Activity

All lobbying activity at the federal, state and local levels must be reported to the state and federal government. Lobbying is any attempt to influence (a) the passage or defeat of legislation; (b) the adoption of any public policy, rule or regulation within an agency; (c) the awarding of a contract; or (d) a decision by a public official. The Office of Government and Community Relations, in conjunction with the Senior Vice President and General Counsel, will determine if any interaction with a federal, state, or local elected official, staff member, or agency/department is considered a reportable lobbying activity.

Additionally, no public or governmental funds are to be used for lobbying activity, which includes travel expenses and any expenses related to preparing for meetings or other communications with public officials. This includes all federal sponsored research funds. For example, faculty or staff may travel to Washington, DC in connection with a federally sponsored program; however, they may not engage in lobbying activity during that time if federal funds are used to pay for travel, meals and lodging.

Gifts and Meals

As the University is a registered lobbying organization, State and federal laws regulate the giving of gifts to local, state, and federal officials by any employee. The University also does not allow the giving of gifts to elected officials or government employees. Gifts include but are not limited to athletic tickets, meals, travel, entertainment, or lodging. Also not allowed are tokens of appreciation or recognition, or providing travel or meals related to official University events or business, without first contacting the Office of Government and Community Relations.

Political Activity and Campaigns

The University values and encourages the expression and exchange of ideas, and encourages students, faculty and staff to exercise their rights and privileges as individual citizens by participating fully in the political processes. Faculty and staff are free to contact public officials on their own personal behalf with issues of concern to themselves, provided they specify they are acting *in their capacity as private citizens, and are not representing the University*. This includes any statements, written or verbal, that could be construed as an endorsement. For additional guidance, please review a copy of the University's policy on partisan political activity, available [here](#).

More information about the University's policies and reporting requirements regarding lobbying or political activity can be found on the Office of Government and Community Relations' [website](#).

We appreciate your attention to this very important legal matter and ask that you share this memo with your faculty and/or staff.