

GUIDELINES CONCERNING USE OF UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA RESOURCES FOR POLITICAL CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

The UNC Policy Manual, Chapter 300.5.1 prohibits activities of university employees related to governmental and political processes that are incompatible with the general responsibilities of public employment.

(<http://www.northcarolina.edu/policy/index.php?pg=vb&tag=300.5.1>)

N.C. General Statute, § 126-13 defines appropriate political activity of State employees and provides that no State employee may take any active part in managing a campaign, or engage in political activity within any period of time during which s/he is expected to perform services for the State. It also prohibits the use of the authority of a State employee's position, or the use of State property to secure support for or to oppose any person or issue in any election. Under § 126-14, it is unlawful for a State employee to coerce a State employee to support or contribute to a political candidate or party.

(http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/bychapter/chapter_126.html, State Personnel Act)

Consistent with these requirements, no University of North Carolina equipment or services (e.g., vehicles and other equipment, campus mail, computers and e-mail, postage, photocopying and fax, etc.) may be used for political campaign activities. This applies equally to University faculty, staff and students, and to individuals external to the University.

Each member of the University community has the right to freely express his/her views on any subject, including advocacy for/against candidates for public office. This is protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and by the N.C. Constitution, Sec. 14, Freedom of Speech and Press. However, in exercising these rights, the resources of the University cannot be used. Engagement in political campaign activities by University employees should be conducted independent of their University employment and at times when such activity does not interfere with employment obligations to the University.

Political campaign activities are permitted on the university campuses as long as they are sponsored or hosted by registered student organizations and all expenses related to the activity, if any, are borne by the candidate, political organizations or student organizations. University facilities may be rented for political events per campus policy on use of University premises and facilities. Such sponsored events may not be subsidized or supported by the University. No campus shall endorse any particular party or candidate. University officials should refrain from activities that may be perceived as university support of a political campaign. UNC Policy Manual, Chapter 300.5.5 prohibits Chancellors and principal staff from being actively involved by endorsing any candidate or becoming identified with any candidate. Anyone can support a candidate on university property that has been designated as a free speech zone.

These guidelines apply explicitly to the use of public resources in support of or in opposition to political campaigns. They are not intended to limit discussion among faculty, administrators, and other State employees regarding political or campaign issues or candidates or to limit debates at which candidates have equal time.