

POLICIES OF THE COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

POLICY FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

Official Statements Policy	Effective Date: August 20, 2024
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PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of this System Policy is to acknowledge and affirm the System’s commitment to freedom of speech and expression and to provide standards for issuing Institutional public statements, including statements that respond to or comment on local, state, regional, national, or global events, activities or issues originating beyond the System and the System Institutions, and to provide guidance and expectations for the System and the System Institutions. This policy also applies when colleges, schools, departments, or other academic or administrative units within the System Institutions have an interest in issuing college, school, department or other unit-level messages on certain activities, issues, or events.

The Colorado State University System (the System) and the System institutions, including Colorado State University, Colorado State University Pueblo, and Colorado State University Global (collectively, the System Institutions, and individually, a System Institution or University) encourage their students, faculty, staff, and other members of the community to participate in political discourse, enlightenment and action, and welcomes these activities to our campuses. The System and the System Institutions recognize the right under the First Amendment of students, visitors, and employees (when acting in their private capacity) to speak freely and openly about issues and ideas in an environment in which the University community can safely engage in these activities free from governmental influence, as set forth in the Board Policy 129 and System Institutional policies on freedom of speech and peaceful assembly.

In contrast with the freedom of speech and expression of private individuals, this policy addresses speech and statements by the System, the System Institutions, and their employees. This policy defines who is authorized to speak and issue statements in an official capacity on behalf of the System, the System Institutions, and their various entities, and how University resources may be used to communicate official positions of the System

and its Institutions, and those official position statements strive to create and support educational environments that value and affirm all members of our community.

APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This policy applies to the System and the System Institutions, including the academic and administrative units at the System Institutions. This policy also applies to System and University faculty, staff, and students. There are no exemptions from this policy.

POLICY PROVISIONS

Official Statements by the Board of Governors and System

The Board of Governors of the Colorado State University System, typically through the Board Chair or the Chancellor, may issue statements on behalf of the entire System. The Board has delegated authority to the Chancellor to issue statements on behalf of the System and Board. Vice Chancellors may issue official statements only in consultation with and with the authorization of the Chancellor, or appropriate personnel within the System. The Chancellor, on behalf of the Board and System, may also sign onto public statements and letters that support the views and official positions of the Board. The Chancellor may also invite campus Presidents to do so on behalf of their institutions.

Official University Statements

The Board has also delegated authority to the President of each System Institution to speak on behalf of or issue statements on behalf of the Institution as a whole. The President may delegate authority to media relations and communications staff to articulate and communicate the University's positions publicly, including as official spokespeople for the Institution. Vice Presidents may issue official statements only in consultation with and with the authorization of the University President or the President's delegee, such as appropriate authorities within the Office of the President. Directors and leaders of other non-academic units may issue official statements specifically relevant to the work and expertise of their division only in consultation with and approval of the appropriate Vice President or other University official who oversees that unit and with the approval of the University President or the President's delegee.

Official Statements by Units within the Institutions

Within the Institution, authority is delegated to College Deans to speak and issue statements on behalf of their respective colleges on topics specific to the work and expertise of the College. Similarly, Academic Department Chairs are authorized to speak and issue statements on behalf of their departments on topics specific to the work and expertise of their departments. Individual faculty are authorized to issue statements on behalf of their

laboratories and research programs specific to the work and expertise of their laboratories and research programs. Faculty may also use their official websites to share viewpoints and information relevant to their work and expertise without seeking further authorization to do so. In addition, non-academic units within the Institutions may issue statements on behalf of their units that are specific to the work and expertise of the unit and their programs. Importantly, college, department, or unit statements that relate to their work or expertise and intersect with, relate to, or respond to or comment on local, state, regional, national, or global events, activities or issues may only be issued in consultation with and approval of the appropriate Provost, Vice President or other University official who oversees that unit and with the approval of the University President or the President's delegee.

Official Statements by Institutional Employee Councils, Faculty, and Task Forces and Committees

The elected heads of employee councils including Faculty Council, Classified Personnel Council, and the Administrative Professional Council are permitted to speak and issue statements on behalf of their councils with respect to the work of the council without prior consent or approval.

Task forces, committees, and other officially constituted groups within the Institutions may not issue public statements without the oversight and permission of the highest-ranking administrator who formally charged the task force, committee, or other group, and any such statement will only be released by the charging entity on behalf of the task force, committee, or group through official University channels.

In addition, as provided in University faculty and administrative professional manuals, members of the faculty and administrative professionals are expected to think and act as a member of the academic profession at the University. Faculty members and administrative professionals are expected to exercise accuracy, judgment, and restraint in public and University statements knowing that the profession and the University will be adjudged by such statements. Moreover, extreme care should be exercised to particularize such statements as one's own, eliminating all possibilities for interpretation of such statements as official statements of the University.

Distribution of Official Statements

Individuals, departments, and colleges may use official CSU resources and channels to publicly share official statements that have been issued on behalf of the System or Institution by the Board, Chancellor, President, Dean, or Department Chair.

The use of System and Institutional resources for political activities and elections is restricted by the Colorado Fair Campaign Practices Act. There are certain exceptions,

including the distribution of faculty summaries prepared on ballot issues, which must include arguments both for and against the proposal, as well as resolutions and positions of advocacy adopted and endorsed by the Board. The CSU System policy on “Elections, Political Activities, and the Colorado Fair Campaign Practices Act,” provides specific guidance.

Prohibition on Unapproved Official Statements

The System and System Institutions, and their colleges, schools, departments, and other academic and non-academic units, as well as employees, faculty, and staff may not issue official statements using University resources or channels or imply University endorsement for statements that have not been approved in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS POLICY

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with applicable policies.

REFERENCES

- Policy 129: CSUS Board Free Speech and Peaceful Assembly Policy
- CSU Administrative Professional and Faculty Manual, Section D.3.3 Responsibilities as a Professional
- CSU System policy on “Elections, Political Activities, and the Colorado Fair Campaign Practices Act
- Fair Campaign Practices Act statute, C.R.S. § 1-45-117
- Questions about this policy or the Fair Campaign Practices Act should be directed to the Office of the General Counsel of the Colorado State University System

APPROVALS

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

By: _____/s/_____
Dr. Tony Frank, Chancellor

Date: _____/s/_____

LEGAL REVIEW

By: _____/s/_____
Jason L. Johnson, General Counsel