

AUBURN UNIVERSITY

Policies on Faculty & Staff Communication with State and Elected Federal Officials

Policy Statement

Auburn University has established policies, procedures, and guidelines pertaining to contacts being made on behalf of the University with federal and state government officials and agencies and to the scheduling of political campaign activities and events on University property. These policies are designed to ensure compliance with legal requirements, to enhance the effectiveness of governmental contacts, and to facilitate coordination and communication within the University.

These policies allow the University to navigate the state and federal government landscapes with a singular voice and agenda and ensure University faculty, staff, and students are in the best position to acquire and utilize educational resources. The University is prohibited by federal tax law, as a 115(1) tax-exempt organization, from participating in any campaign or partisan activities. All members of the Auburn University community, faculty, staff, and students are expected, at all times, to distinguish between when they speak or act in their personal capacity (including when they speak or act on behalf of professional societies and other organizations) and when they speak or act on behalf of the University's interests.

Policy on Personal and Professional Contacts with Government Officials

Personal contacts (including those on behalf of professional societies and other organizations) with elected or appointed officials or governmental agencies, whether in person or in writing, must be done in the name of the individual or the professional society or organization. Auburn University letterhead, envelopes or email must not be used, and any reference to affiliation with the University must be made only as an aid to identify the individual making the contact. It must be made clear that the contact is not being made on behalf of the University.

Policy on Contacts with United States Congressional Officials

The Office of Public Affairs conducts and oversees all Auburn University government relations and activities with United States Congressional Officials. The University complies with all federal lobbying disclosure laws and regulations and ethics rules associated with governmental entities and tax-exempt organizations. Only individuals approved in accordance with this policy are authorized to represent Auburn University's interests with these federal officials, which includes members of Congress and congressional staff. The responsibility for authorizing such persons rests with the [Director of the Office of Public Affairs](#).

Policy on Contacts with State Officials and Agencies

[The Office of Governmental Affairs](#) conducts and oversees all Auburn University government relations and activities with State Officials and Agencies. Only individuals authorized by the [Executive Director of Governmental Affairs](#) are authorized to represent Auburn University's interests with state officials. The following procedures and guidelines are designed to help ensure communication and coordination within the institution and to maximize the effectiveness of any proposed contact. It is recognized that such contacts with state officials and agencies may take several forms, including individual or group meetings, testimony before executive or legislative bodies, presentation of written materials or electronic transmissions, invitations to visit campuses, and responses to requests for information.

Guidelines for Interactions with State and Elected Federal Officials

Individual or Group Meetings with Executive and Legislative Elected Officials and Staff

If an individual or group is representing a personal interest (including professional organizations) and is not representing the University, the Office of Governmental Affairs (state-level) and Office of Public Affairs (federal-level) would appreciate being notified of the meeting for informational purposes only, but there is no specific requirement for such notification.

Appearances before Executive and Legislative Bodies, Committees, Study Groups, and Commissions

If such appearances are for the purpose of representing the interests of Auburn University, the Office of Governmental Affairs (state-level) and Office of Public Affairs (federal-level) must be notified and must grant approval for such representation. This guideline applies to all instances when the request to appear before a governmental body is contingent upon the individual's affiliation with Auburn University. As referenced above, if the appearance is personal (including professional organizations) and it is made clear that the presenter is not representing Auburn University, the Office of Governmental Affairs and Office of Public Affairs would appreciate being notified of the appearance for information purposes only, but there is no specific requirement for such notification. This exemption applies only when the request to appear before a governmental body is not contingent upon the individual's affiliation with Auburn University.

Written Materials or Electronic Transmissions

It is useful for government officials to receive official University publications and periodicals; however, it is important to coordinate such distributions to avoid duplication and other problems that may result from overloading officials with such material. Therefore, the distribution of materials to officials must be authorized by the Office of Governmental Affairs (state-level) and Office of Public Affairs (federal-level)

Invitations of Government Officials to Visit Campuses

The University welcomes visits by elected or appointed officials and staff, whether they visit as private citizens or in their capacity as government officials. Invitations to elected or appointed officials to visit any campus of the University in their official capacity are to be conducted by the Office of Governmental Affairs (state-level) and Office of Public Affairs (federal-level).

Responses to Requests for Information, Reports, and Data from Elected or Appointed Officials and Staff

When requests for information, reports, and data related to the University have been made to the campuses or to individual faculty and staff members of the University community, responses to such requests must be approved prior to transmission by the Office of Governmental Affairs (state-level) and Office of Public Affairs (federal-level). The same distinction between the interests of Auburn University and personal interests described in the section about appearances before governmental bodies applies to requests for information, reports and data.