



# East Carolina University

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## Memorandum

To: The ECU Community

From: Steve Ballard  
Chancellor

Date: March 30, 2012

Subject: Summary of Restrictions Regarding Political Activities by  
University Employees

As we enter into political campaign and elections season, I want to remind our campus of the policies and laws applying to politically-related activities of public employees (all faculty and staff). Being a state employee does not mean you lose any of your constitutional rights to participate or not participate as you desire in the political process as long as such participation is not on work time and does not involve the use of university property. However, what each employee may do on the job, with state resources, using or implicating the name of the university, or otherwise affecting your job responsibilities is highly regulated by law as well as by UNC system policy. This memorandum summarizes the laws and policies and is intended as a helpful resource to address questions you may have.

1. No employee may take an active part in managing a campaign, or campaign for political office or otherwise engage in political activity during working hours. N.C.G.S. §126-13; State Personnel Manual (Section 3, page 35); UNC Policy 300.5.1.
2. No employee may use his or her position, state or university funds, services (including mail or email service), supplies (including letterhead), equipment (including telephone and computers), vehicles or other university property to support or oppose a candidate or an issue in an election involving candidates for office or party nominations. N.C.G.S. §126-13; UNC Policy 300.5.1.
3. Community service leave may ONLY be used for working inside a polling facility in a non partisan role such as assisting voters with the voting process. However, if an employee is receiving any payment for such activities, then vacation leave (or available comp time balances) must be charged. Standing outside the polling facility and distributing candidate information is partisan activity and vacation leave (or available

comp time) must be used.

4. No employee may coerce an employee to support or contribute to a political candidate or party or to change voter registration. N.C.G.S. §126-14.
5. No EPA employee (including Faculty and EPA Professionals) may promise preferential treatment or threaten detrimental treatment of an employee to induce support or opposition to a candidate. UNC Policy No. 300.5.1.
6. If running for or holding office, all EPA employees (Faculty and EPA Professionals) must comply with UNC Policies 300.5.1 through 300.5.4 and 300.5.6. For many types of office, the policies require that before becoming a candidate or holding political office, the university employee must make certain disclosures and receive various approvals on a prescribed schedule. Prospective candidates or office holders for some political office must petition the Chancellor for approval months in advance; failure to do so may result in loss of university employment.

The full policy and related resources can be found at the following:

<http://www.northcarolina.edu/legal/sm/political/political.htm>

Advice concerning the interpretation and application of the laws and policies may be addressed to the University Attorney, Donna Gooden Payne, at 252-328-6940 or by email at [PAYNED@ECU.EDU](mailto:PAYNED@ECU.EDU). If you have questions about leave policies, please contact ECU Human Resources.

Thank you.