

Election Season Guidance for Emory Faculty and Staff

As the 2024 U.S. elections draw near, faculty and staff may have questions related to political engagement in the context of their work at Emory. The Office of Government and Community Affairs (OGCA) offers a variety of resources to help individuals understand laws governing political activity on campus and navigate common questions that may arise in class or in the workplace. Faculty and staff are encouraged to familiarize themselves with this guidance, and to contact OGCA for assistance as needed.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

As a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt entity, Emory must adhere to certain legal restrictions on lobbying and political activity even while continuing to advance its commitment to academic freedom, information-sharing, debate and discourse. An August 2024 *Emory News* article, "[Preparing for election season: What you should know about Emory, advocacy, lobbying and political campaigning](#)," provides an overview of these requirements and links to resources, including:

- [Emory's Lobbying Policy \(login required\)](#)
- [Office of the General Counsel advisory on contributions to political campaigns](#)
- [Emory Finance Division guidance on lobbying and political activities](#)

In general, Emory University is prohibited from participation or intervention in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. While all members of the Emory community are free to express their political opinions and engage in political activities, it is very important that they do so only in their individual capacities and avoid even the appearance that they are speaking or acting on behalf of the University on political matters. See below for common questions related to this guidance.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I discuss the upcoming election in class?

The principle of academic freedom generally gives wide latitude to what faculty may discuss in class, although they should avoid introducing controversial topics that have no relationship to their subject.

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The Center for Faculty Development and Excellence offers resources to support faculty in facilitating academic discussions related to the election or other potentially contentious issues. The following modules are available through the [CFDE Knowledge Hub](#) on Canvas ([self-enroll](#) for access):

- [Pivot Pedagogy for Turbulent Times](#)
Video recording from an August 2024 CFDE workshop.
- [Managing the 2024 Election on Campus](#)
Infographic with tips for managing critical conversations in academic arenas.

Can I provide extra credit to students who attend a political rally?

Depending on the course's subject matter, it may be appropriate to give students the opportunity to engage in the political system and award extra credit for that engagement. However, this should not be weighted toward any one party, and you cannot give extra credit for a specific campaign rally or a specific protest.

Faculty also cannot dismiss class and tell students to go to a political rally.

Can faculty and staff wear political clothing, such as campaign hats or T-shirts?

While performing official Emory duties, employees are not permitted to wear campaign buttons or clothing, display signs on university property or engage in other activities that can be perceived as political endorsements.

Can Emory host a campaign rally?

No, current law prohibits 501(c)(3) tax-exempt entities such as Emory from directly or indirectly participating in any political campaign.

Where do I direct students if they ask how to register to vote?

The [Emory Votes Initiative](#) provides our campus with nonpartisan voter information and other credible resources.

Does Emory provide paid time off for employees to vote?

Under the Voting Policy ([Policy 4.89](#)), Emory employees are allowed to take up to 4 hours of paid time to vote. These hours may be used for early voting or on Election Day.

What are limitations to Emory's polling site?

Per state law, no political campaign paraphernalia is permitted within 150 feet of DeKalb's polling location, located at 1599 Clifton Road, measured from the outer edges of that building. This includes voters, volunteers, staff in the building, and visitors; it includes signs and clothing. Additionally, there are restrictions on demonstrations within a certain distance of not just the building, but also any voter lines that extend past the 150 feet boundary.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

Contact the [Office of Government and Community Affairs](#) (gca.emory.edu) if you need further assistance.

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