



POLICY TITLE:

Viewpoint Neutrality

APPLIES TO:

Regents, Students, Faculty, Staff, Contractors, Vendors, and Visitors

ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY:

**Board of Regents
Office of the President**

APPROVED BY:

Kentucky State University Board of Regents

EFFECTIVE DATE:

June 27, 2025

NEXT REVIEW DATE:

June 27, 2028

POLICY STATEMENT:

Kentucky State University (KSU) is committed to maintaining an academic environment that champions open inquiry and the unrestricted exchange of diverse perspectives. KSU recognizes that educational excellence flourishes when individuals from varied backgrounds and with differing viewpoints engage in meaningful scholarly discourse without fear of discrimination based on their social or political viewpoints.

KSU maintains institutional neutrality on political and social issues that fall outside the scope of its educational mission, operational requirements, and legal mandates. This commitment ensures that the institution serves as an open forum for intellectual exploration rather than as an advocate for particular ideological positions.

Individual members of the KSU community retain their fundamental rights to express their personal views, participate in civic activities, and engage in advocacy consistent with applicable KSU policies and legal requirements. The institution's neutrality does not restrict personal academic freedom or individual expression but rather creates space for all perspectives to be heard and evaluated through reasoned debate.

KSU expressly prohibits the use of ideological litmus tests in employment decisions, contract decisions, academic evaluations, student admissions, or degree conferrals. No individual shall be required to affirm or reject specific political, social, or cultural positions as a condition of participation in KSU programs or employment.

DEFINITIONS:

Designated Representative

An individual authorized by the President to communicate KSU's official positions or speak on behalf of the institution in specific circumstances.

Institutional Neutrality

KSU's commitment to refrain from adopting official positions on disputed political, social, or cultural issues that do not directly impact KSU operations, academic missions, or legal compliance obligations.

Official KSU Position

Any formal declaration, resolution, or public communication issued under KSU's authority that purports to represent the institution's stance on matters of public concern.

PROCESS:

Authority for Official KSU Positions

Only the President possesses the authority to establish and communicate official KSU positions. The President may delegate this authority, in writing, to specific individuals for defined purposes and circumstances. All official communications must align with institutional neutrality principles and focus solely on matters directly related to KSU's educational mission, operational needs, or legal obligations.

Board of Regents Communications

Pursuant to *The Gold Book: Bylaws of the Kentucky State University Board of Regents*, the Board Chair holds the exclusive authority to issue statements representing the Board of Regents' official position on a particular matter. Board communications must adhere to institutional neutrality standards and address only those matters within the Board's governance responsibilities.

Individual Expression Guidelines

Personal Capacity Communications

Faculty, staff, and students may express personal viewpoints on any topic when clearly identifying themselves as speaking in their individual capacities rather than on behalf of KSU.

Academic Freedom Protection

Nothing in this policy restricts scholarly inquiry, classroom discussion, research activities, or academic debate within appropriate educational contexts.

Civic Participation

KSU community members may participate in political activities, advocacy organizations, and public service consistent with applicable ethics policies and legal requirements.

Implementation Standards

Presidential Responsibilities

- Establishes protocols for official KSU communications
- Ensures institutional neutrality compliance with regard to public statements
- Authorizes designated representatives when appropriate
- Reviews and approves statements that may impact institutional neutrality

Board Chair Responsibilities

- Maintains Board adherence to neutrality principles
- Coordinates with the President on matters affecting both Board and institutional communications
- Ensures Board statements focus on governance matters

Compliance and Accountability

Violations of this policy shall be addressed through established KSU disciplinary procedures that are appropriate to an individual's role and relationship with KSU. Serious breaches may result in loss of speaking authority, disciplinary action, or other remedial measures as determined by KSU leadership.

REFERENCES AND RELATED MATERIALS:

- *The Gold Book: Bylaws of the Kentucky State University Board of Regents*
- Equal Opportunity & Non-Discrimination Policy
- Anti-Discrimination & Non-Retaliation Policy
- Free Speech Policy

CONTACTS:

| Subject | Office | Telephone | E-mail |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--|
| Policy Questions and Interpretation | General Counsel | (502) 597-6414 | Zachary.Atwell@kysu.edu General.Counsel@kysu.edu |

HISTORY:

| Revision Type | Date of Issuance/Revision | Drafter(s)/Editor(s) |
|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Issued (New Policy) | June 2025 | Zach Atwell |
