Policy: **Political Activity on Campus**	
Issuing Department**:** **Office of the President**	
Date last revised: **May 2006**	

PURPOSE

During each election year, just before the election, questions arise with respect to permissible political activity members of the campus community. This information is intended to serve as a guideline for appropriate conduct relating to political activity as it is in compliance with applicable law.

POLICY

It is the policy of Western Oregon University to allow campus community members to generally express their personal political views. This guideline extends that philosophy wherever it is appropriate. The overriding consideration in handling this issue is the use of plain common sense.

PROCEDURES

Guidelines for Employee Activity:

Employees may engage in personal communication on their own time.

Incidental work area discussions of political subjects should not be encouraged, but should only be prohibited to the extent that they impede the work of the agency or employee. Otherwise, such discussions should be treated just as other non-work-related discussions are treated.

Managers who are asked to publicly discuss ballot measures in their official capacities (e.g., in an informational public forum) may do so only to the extent that the information they provide is purely factual. They must avoid taking positions in the official capacity. However, they may, to the extent factually possible, address the effect of a measure on existing or future programs.

Written Political Communication -

Employees may distribute flyers and leaflets on their own time. This is permitted as long as the material is clearly labeled as other than state-sponsored.

Union material for distribution in the workplace should be placed on a table made available by management and should not be distributed on the desk of each employee. This material must be clearly labeled as other than state-sponsored. Leafleting outside state buildings by individuals not on state time is permissible.

NOTE: Public employees do have the right to express personal political views but this is not an unlimited right.

Materials in the Work Area -

Employees may post political material in their PRIVATE work areas. However, for those areas with heavy foot traffic or open to public view, employees may not post materials reflecting their political views.

Political buttons are permitted, however, not on state-provided uniforms.

NOTE: Expression should be done in such a way as to avoid the likelihood that an observer would believe that the employee is conducting political activities while on the job during working hours.

Meetings -

No political meetings may be held on work time. No state sponsorship can be inferred even though a meeting may be held in a state facility. Due to union contracts, union meetings are permitted in state facilities. However, the meetings are held by the union, not by the state. The state should not attempt to regulate the content of the union's meetings even if they so choose to have political candidates speak. These meetings should not be open to the public or non-union employees since they are union meetings.

Politically themed, non-union meetings are also permitted pursuant to statutes and rules cited on building usage. If no meeting is regularly allowed in the facility, the fact that the meeting will have a political theme does not change the general rule.

Bulletin Boards -

Posting of political material may only be done on clearly marked union boards.

AUTHORITY

Authority for this policy is granted in Article 1, Section 8 of the Oregon Constitution, ORS 260.432(2), ORS 243.650-243.782 (PECBA), ORS 276.095(4) & 276.440, and the Federal Hatch Act, 5 USC 1501-1508.

RESPONSIBILITY

Office of the President

Date of next review: **May 2011**

Alternate formats of this policy are available from the Office of Human Resources.