

PROPOSED BOARD POLICY REVISIONS

Equal opportunity and merit

4.2.3.5 Equal Opportunity in Admissions

All admissions processes and decisions shall be free of ideological tests, affirmations, and oaths. No applicant for admission shall be asked to or required to affirmatively ascribe to or opine about political beliefs, affiliations, ideals, or principles, including diversity statements, as a condition for admission.

6.5.2 Institution Freedom of Expression Policies

As public institutions of higher education, USG institutions must promote free expression and academic freedom on their campuses. To that end, the unrestricted outdoor areas of institutions are deemed public forums for the campus community of each institution. For purposes of this policy, the campus community means students, faculty, staff, and their invited guests. While institutions may need to enact policies to promote campus safety, to ensure the proper functioning of the academic environment and institution activities, or to further other important institution objectives, those policies should not unduly burden the free expression rights of students, faculty, and staff.

Institutions may maintain and enforce reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions narrowly tailored to serve a significant institutional interest. Such restrictions must employ clear, published, content- and viewpoint-neutral criteria, and provide for ample alternative means of expression. Finally, any such restrictions may include reservation requirements, if needed, but must also allow for members of the campus community to spontaneously and contemporaneously assemble or distribute literature.

Institutions can designate accessible, high-traffic locations on campus as public forum areas for individuals or groups who are not members of the campus community and can require these individuals or groups to comply with reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions, including reservation

requirements. Institutions may not consider the content or viewpoint of expression when requiring or assigning use of public forum areas.

USG institutions must place their student free expression policies and procedures in the student handbook and make the same publicly available online. Student orientation programs must incorporate these policies and procedures as well as related training in civil discourse, open inquiry, robust debate, intellectual diversity, and respect for others. These policies and procedures must also be incorporated into student orientation programs. Finally, institutions must develop materials, programs, and procedures to ensure that faculty and staff understand the institutional policies and duties regarding free expression on campus. No institution orientation or training for students or employees may include affirmations, ideological tests, or oaths, including diversity statements.

6.6 Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment

~~The Board of Regents prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation within the University System of Georgia (USG) and all USG institutions based on any characteristic protected by law.~~

Equal opportunity and decisions based on merit are fundamental values of the University System of Georgia (USG). The Board of Regents prohibits discrimination on the basis of an individual's age, color, disability, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, or veteran status ("protected status"). No individual shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to unlawful discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under, any USG program or activity because of the individual's protected status; nor shall any individual be given preferential treatment because of the individual's protected status, except that preferential treatment may be given on the basis of veteran status when appropriate under federal or state law.

8.2.1 Equal Employment Opportunity

~~No person shall be excluded from employment or participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under any program or activity conducted by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG) or any USG institution based on any characteristic protected by law. Incidents of discrimination, unlawful harassment, and retaliation will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the USG.~~

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All employment processes and decisions, including but not limited to hiring, promotion, and tenure, shall be free of ideological tests, affirmations, and oaths, including diversity statements. The basis and determining factor for all such decisions should be that the individual possesses the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with the role, and is believed to have the ability to successfully perform the essential functions, responsibilities, and duties associated with the position for which the individual is being considered. At the core of any such decision is ensuring the institution's ability to achieve its mission and strategic priorities in support of student success.

8.2.5 Employee Orientation and Training

Each new employee shall read and become familiar with the contents of the policies and procedures of the Board of Regents, the University System of Georgia (USG), and the employee's institution that are applicable to the employee.

All mandatory training required by an institution must be approved by the institution's Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) and the institution's President. No institution training may include affirmations, ideological tests, or oaths, including diversity statements. Mandatory employee training should be limited to that which complies with Board of Regents policy and federal and state laws and regulations. Individual units and departments within an institution are not permitted to mandate training for department employees beyond that approved by the institution's CHRO and President.

8.3.5 Evaluation of Personnel

8.3.5.1 Faculty

Faculty shall be evaluated based on the merits of their performance and qualifications. As such, Each University System of Georgia (USG) institution shall establish definite and stated criteria, consistent with Board of Regents' policies, the Academic and Student Affairs Handbook and the statutes of the institution, against which the performance of each faculty member will be evaluated. The criteria shall include evaluation of instruction, student success activities, research/scholarship, and service as is appropriate to the faculty member's institution, school or college, and department, and responsibilities. The criteria shall be submitted to the USG Chief Academic Officer for review and approval. Faculty shall not be evaluated based on other factors outside of these established criteria.

Each institution, as part of its evaluative procedures, will utilize a system of faculty evaluations by students, with the improvement of teaching effectiveness and student learning as the main focus of these student evaluations. The evaluation procedures may also utilize a system of peer evaluations, with emphasis placed on the faculty member's professional development across the scope of their responsibilities. In those cases, in which a faculty member's primary responsibilities do not include teaching, the evaluation should focus on excellence in those areas (e.g., research, administration, and elements of student success) where the individual's major responsibilities lie. While a faculty member's performance evaluation may be deemed as "Not Meeting Expectations" for other reasons, they must

be so assessed if a majority of their work responsibilities are assessed as “Not Meeting Expectations”.

Each University System of Georgia (USG) institution shall conduct in-depth pre-tenure reviews of all faculty in their third year of progress toward tenure with a focus on the criteria established for promotion and tenure, emphasizing excellence in teaching and involvement in student success activities. The institution shall develop pre-tenure review policies, as well as any subsequent revisions.

The result of the faculty member’s annual evaluations will be utilized as a part of subsequent pre- tenure and post-tenure reviews as well as retention, promotion, and tenure decisions.

Institutional and employee political activity

6.4 Political Interference

The Board of Regents is unalterably opposed to political interference or domination of any kind or character in the affairs of any University System of Georgia (USG) institution. Accordingly, USG institutions shall remain neutral on social and political issues unless such an issue is directly related to the institution's core mission.

8.2.18.3 Prohibition on Certain Political Activities; No Official Endorsement of Affiliation and Avoidance of the Appearance Thereof

USG employees are encouraged to exercise their First Amendment rights, fulfill their civic obligations and engage in the normal political processes of society. This includes the right to express their personal opinions on matters of public concern; to register to vote, and otherwise participate in elections; and to participate in and make financial contributions to political organizations and campaigns. ~~and n~~ Nothing in this policy is intended to infringe or restrict free expression rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution or the Georgia Constitution. Nevertheless, it is inappropriate for USG employees to engage in such political activities ~~manage or enter political campaigns~~ while on duty to perform services for the USG, to utilize USG or other public resources to do so, or to hold elective political office at the state or federal level while employed by the USG. Likewise, USG employees must not hold themselves out as speaking or acting on behalf of the USG or its institutions when participating in political activities and must take reasonable measures to avoid any appearance that such participation is in an official capacity as an employee of the USG or its institutions.

In light of the foregoing, the following rules govern all USG employees when engaging in political activities and associated political expression:

1. A USG employee may not manage or take an active part in a political campaign that interferes with the performance of duties or services for which he or she receives compensation from the USG.

2. A USG employee may not hold elective political office at the state or federal level.
3. A USG employee seeking elective political office at the state or federal level must first request a leave of absence without pay beginning prior to qualification as a candidate in a primary or general election and ending after the general or final election. If elected to state or federal office, a USG employee must resign prior to assuming office.
4. A USG employee may seek and hold elective office at other than the state or federal level, or seek and hold an appointive office, when doing so does not conflict or interfere with the employee's duties and responsibilities to the USG or the employee's institution, as applicable.
5. A USG employee engaging in political activities and/or associated political expression must do so only in their personal capacity and shall not speak on behalf of the USG or its institutions or hold themselves out as representing the USG or its institutions, unless specifically authorized by the USG or the employee's institution, as applicable.
6. When a USG employee engages in political activities and/or associated political expression in their personal capacity, such employee must take reasonable steps to avoid any appearance that such political activities and/or associated political expression represents the views of, or is endorsed by, the USG or its institutions. For example, USG employees are not prohibited from noting in a biographical description their employment status, title, or affiliation with the USG or their institution, or their background and credentials, but if an employee does so, the employee must make clear that the employee is not speaking in the employee's capacity as an employee of the USG or the employee's institution.
7. USG employees are prohibited from using state property, resources, or materials (including work email) or work time to communicate personal political views or in conjunction with any political campaigning. In addition, employees are prohibited from using any USG registered trademarks when expressing personal opinions on political issues, unless they are expressly authorized to do so.

8. USG employees shall not make any promise of preferential treatment or any threat of detrimental treatment or actually confer such treatment for purpose of inducing the support of or opposition to any political campaign or candidate for political office, political party, or political organization.

7.9. Neither USG, any USG institution, nor any employee thereof shall ask or require any employee, student, or applicant for employment or admission to affirmatively ascribe to or opine about political beliefs, affiliations, ideals, or principles as a condition for employment, promotion, admission, enrollment, or any benefit or privilege related thereto. This prohibition shall not, however, prevent any employee, student, or applicant for employment or admission from voluntarily engaging in such expression.

Any employee who violates these prohibitions on certain political activities shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Mandatory civics instruction for students

3.3.4 United States and Georgia History and Constitutions

All USG institutions shall give instruction in the history of the United States, in the history of Georgia, and in the essentials of the United States Constitution and the Constitution of Georgia. For students first enrolling in the 2025-2026 academic year or after, institutions must create learning outcomes in instruction/assessment that address key concepts to include the following primary sources:

- Declaration of Independence
- United States Constitution and Bill of Rights
- Articles of Confederation
- Federalist Papers
- Gettysburg Address
- Emancipation Proclamation
- Letter from Birmingham Jail
- Georgia's Bill of Rights
- Amendments to the Georgia Constitution

No undergraduate student shall receive a certificate of graduation or a degree without successfully completing coursework or passing a satisfactory examination on the history of the United States, the history of Georgia, and the provisions and principles of the United States Constitution and the Constitution of Georgia. This provision complies with O.C.G.A. Section 20-3-68.

US DOE recognized accreditation agencies

3.1 General Policy on Academic Affairs

The Chancellor, the University System Office of Academic Affairs and the University System of Georgia (USG) presidents, their administrative officers and faculties shall develop, adapt, and administer the academic methods and procedures deemed by them to be most effective in promoting efficient operations and the advancement of learning.

Proper functions of the academic authorities include the following:

1. Prescribing the teaching load to be carried by each member of the faculty;
2. Determining the maximum and minimum number of students permitted in a class; and,
3. Defining the nature and form of academic records to be kept concerning members of the faculties and administrative personnel.

Each USG institution president and his or her administrative officers, faculty, and staff shall promote effective higher education and efficient service having in view resources available to the institution. USG academic authorities shall choose the appropriate ways and means that are best adapted to achieve the ends desired. The Board of Regents will hold institutions accountable for their results.

Each institution must maintain accreditation by an accreditation agency recognized by the United States Department of Education as a reliable authority regarding the quality of education or training offered by the institutions they accredit~~the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges~~ and ensure that all programs requiring accreditation by law, regulation, or Board of Regents' Policy are appropriately accredited.

3.3.5.2 General Education Course Transfer

This policy outlines the mechanisms through which TCSG general education courses are approved for transfer to USG institutions and is set

forth to ensure that students who transfer between TCSG and USG institutions will not be required to repeat the course work approved for transfer that was successfully completed at another institution.

USG institutions and TCSG institutions will accept general education courses for transfer between their respective institutions as articulated in the TCSG USG Course Transfer Chart referenced in the USG Academic and Student Affairs Handbook. Courses will only be accepted from institutions accredited by the SACSCOCa United States Department of Education-recognized accrediting agency. Both the USG and the TCSG are committed to and responsible for assuring that faculty teaching these courses meet the SACSCOC-comprehensive standards for faculty qualifications required by each institution's accrediting agency.

New TCSG general education courses proposed to be added to the TCSG USG Course Transfer Chart for transfer to USG institutions into any of the Core IMPACTS domains will follow the same review procedure required for new Core Curriculum courses proposed by USG institutions:

- The TCSG System Office staff will present the proposed course(s) to the USG System Office.
- The USG System Office will convene a meeting of the appropriate disciplinary Regents Academic Advisory Committee(s). Non-voting faculty designated from the TCSG will be invited to participate.
- Course(s) approved by a Regents Academic Advisory Committee for transfer into any of the Core IMPACTS domains will be recommended to the USG General Education Council for review.
- Course(s) approved by the USG General Education Council will be reviewed by System Office staff who will submit the courses to the USG Board of Regents for final action.

Upon receipt of USG Board of Regents approval for the designated course(s), TCSG colleges will clearly publicize the designated approval categories to TCSG students, and the USG will update the TCSG USG Course Transfer Chart and notify all USG institutions.

This same process would apply to any TCSG courses already on the USG Course Transfer Chart that have been significantly modified.

3.3.6 Academic Credit Earned Through Extra-Institutional and Prior Learning

University System of Georgia (USG) institutions shall provide students with opportunities to be evaluated and earn academic credit for assessed extra-institutional and prior learning toward the completion of a degree program, including course credit earned from military experience.

Once transcribed to the student record, credits awarded for extra-institutional and prior learning at a USG institution shall be applied toward a degree program, regardless of how the credit was earned. Credits awarded for extra-institutional and prior learning by one USG institution shall transfer as the designated course to another USG institution if a student has passed a higher-level course in the course sequence offered at the previously attended USG institution.

Institutions shall maintain a review process for extra-institutional and prior learning that adheres to the institutional accrediting agency's SACSCOC policies and guidelines, minimizes the number of credits that do not contribute to progress toward a degree program, and does not improperly affect student eligibility for financial aid. Additional guidance for awarding credit for extra-institutional or prior learning is provided in the Academic & Student Affairs Handbook.

Hiring of senior administrators

2.6.3 Personnel Policies

The Board of Regents has the Constitutional authority for the government, control, and management of the University System of Georgia (USG) and all of its institutions, which includes the oversight of institutional hiring and search processes.

The President is responsible for the initial appointment of faculty members and administrative employees of each institution and the salary and all promotions of those employees. The President may reappoint faculty members and administrative employees except as otherwise specified in this Policy Manual. The President may accept the resignation of any employee of his or her institution on behalf of the Board of Regents.

To ensure accountability and effective management of the institution, the President shall consult with the Chancellor or the Chancellor's designee about significant personnel actions involving certain administrative employees as required by other provisions of this Policy Manual. These employees include, but may not be limited to, the chief business officer, chief academic officer, Title IX coordinator, and internal auditor.

USG institutions must have a formal search process for all senior administrator hires which would include details surrounding the search process, priorities, the make-up of committee members, hiring criteria, and the use of search firms if search firms are to be used. For purposes of this policy, senior administrators include: provosts, vice presidents, vice provosts, deans, and similar level positions.

The Board of Regents gives the authority to the Chancellor or the Chancellor's designee to make any changes to an institution's search process based on the Board's priorities. Each President is ultimately responsible for all hires at the institution.

The President may grant leaves of absence for members of the faculty for study at other institutions or for such reasons as the President may deem proper.

The President shall make such reports as required from time to time to the Board, through the Chancellor, of the condition of the institution under his or her leadership.

