

Frequently Asked Questions

Proposed Revision to Section 300.5.1 of the UNC Policy Manual *Political Activities of Employees*

What does this policy revision accomplish?

The revision to Section 300.5.1 of the UNC Policy manual codifies the University's commitment to free expression and restricts vague or ideologically motivated statement requirements in admissions or hiring. The amendment protects prospective students and employees from being denied opportunity on the basis of their beliefs.

What is compelled speech?

In the context of this policy, compelled speech means any form of speech or expression requiring an individual to demonstrate agreement with certain beliefs or ideological commitments in exchange for access to employment, career advancement, or admission.

Does this mean UNC faculty and staff can't endorse an ideological statement?

No. This policy does not prevent or suppress any form of voluntary speech, opinion, or expression. The UNC System encourages employees to exercise fully and freely their right to participate, or to refrain from participating, in political processes and other forms of speech or expression without fear of penalty or reprisal.

Who will this policy revision impact?

The policy revision is designed to protect the staff, faculty, and students of UNC system institutions, ensuring they are not denied opportunities for employment, advancement, or admission on the basis of sociological or political viewpoints. This policy protects the right to exercise speech, or to refrain from exercising speech.

Why do we need this policy revision?

Constitutional issues arise when universities or university systems — especially public institutions — require current and/or prospective faculty and staff to demonstrate their commitment to certain ideals, political issues, or principles. This policy revision is necessary to protect the individual rights of our faculty, staff, and students, and to preserve their right to participate in, or to refrain from participating in, political processes and other forms of speech.

Why now?

The UNC System must protect the constitutional rights of its constituents. It is important to ensure that our employees and students are able to express their sincerely held beliefs without penalty from their respective institutions.