



OFFICIAL POLICY

1.3

Policy on Institutional Voice

3/28/25

Policy Statement

The Board of Trustees will employ best practices regarding the College of Charleston's role in public discourse on issues of the day.

In reviewing the issues of institutional voice, open discourse and freedom of expression on campus, the Board of Trustees agrees with three main principles:

- **Adhere to areas within one's professional expertise.** University presidents and other administrators are not experts in the myriad social and political issues in the state, country and world. They are experts in running a university. Individual faculty members may have expertise in their field or discipline and may speak out, just not for the university.
- **It is not possible to satisfy the interests of all parties.** When the university speaks as one voice on issues of the day, the near-certain controversy around a statement distracts from the university's core mission of educating students and may even put certain members of the campus community at risk.
- **Avoid imposing undue restrictions on free speech.** Members of the campus community who disagree with the university's statement on an issue or event will most probably be reluctant to share their views, which is counter to the university serving as a space for the open dialogue of diverse ideas, opinions and perspectives.

Policy Manager and Responsible Department or Office

Office of the President

Policy

The Board of Trustees directs the university and its leaders to issue official statements only when directly related to the university's academic mission and business and not about public matters or issues of the day. In a circumstance where an official statement is needed, the Board of Trustees encourages the administration to take a restrained, politically neutral approach in its messaging, so as not to inhibit academic freedom and the diversity of thought on campus.

This policy is not intended to prevent individual college community members from exercising their First Amendment rights. The College of Charleston supports the free speech rights of its students, faculty, staff and visitors when speaking as individual citizens and not purporting to speak on behalf of the university.

Departments/Offices Affected by the Policy

All departments/offices.

Procedures Related to the Policy

3.7.4 Communicating with Elected Officials; 3.7.1 Media Relations: Press Releases, Public Statements, Communicating with the Media, Opinion Essays and Letters to the Editor

Related Policies, Documents or Forms

College of Charleston Board of Trustees By-laws

Issue Date: 3/28/25 Date of Policy Revision: N/A	Next Review Date: 3/28/30
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POLICY APPROVAL

(For use by the Office of the Board of Trustees or the Office of the President)

Policy Number: 1.3

Chairman, Board of Trustees



Date: 3/28/25