

## Guidelines for Colleges Regarding Initiative Campaigns

This document is an educational tool. It is intended to provide the two-year college system with information about what is acceptable under RCW 42.52.180 – Ethics in Public Service – the statute that specifies what state officers and employees can and can't do on state time related to the use of state resources. These guidelines are meant to assist in complying with the law. It is impossible to list every possible situation. College staff and students are encouraged to read the statute below and, if there are any questions, consult with the Executive Ethics Board. Neither the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges nor the Office of the Attorney General may provide you with individual advice or representation on personal ethical questions.

RCW 42.52.180 provides in part: (1) No state officer or state employee may use or authorize the use of facilities of an agency, directly or indirectly, for the purpose of assisting a campaign for election of a person to an office or for the promotion of or opposition to a ballot proposition. Knowing acquiescence by a person with authority to direct, control, or influence the actions of the state officer or state employee using public resources in violation of this section constitutes a violation of this section. Facilities of an agency include, but are not limited to, use of stationery, postage, machines, and equipment, use of state employees of the agency during working hours, vehicles, office space, publications of the agency, and clientele lists of persons served by the agency.

| Group                  | Prohibited Activities  | Permitted Activities   |
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| <p><b>Trustees</b></p> | <p>A trustee cannot use college staff, facilities, equipment, vehicles, computers, mail, agency publications, or mailing lists to support or oppose an initiative.</p> <p>The Board of Trustees may not take an official position on an initiative by resolution, motion or otherwise.</p> <p>Trustees may not coerce, pressure or subject employees or students to undue influence to participate in a political activity or to take a particular position.</p> | <p>In their role as trustees, the board has the responsibility to be informed on the effect of the initiative on the college and the implications on the college district's budget. Board members may provide this information externally if this information is requested.</p> <p>As a citizen, a trustee may take a position on an initiative and get involved in supporting or opposing an initiative. In taking a position or getting involved in a campaign, the trustee should not use the "trustee" role.</p> |

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| <p><b>Presidents</b></p> | <p>A president cannot use college staff, facilities, equipment, vehicles, computers, mail, agency publications, or mailing lists to support or oppose an initiative.</p> <p>In his or her role, a president cannot take an official position on an initiative.</p> <p>Presidents may not coerce, pressure or subject employees or students to undue influence to participate in a political activity or to take a particular position.</p> | <p>A president has the right and responsibility to inform the college community and the community at large of the effect of the initiative on the college and the implications on the college district's budget. The president may provide this information externally, if this information is requested.</p> <p>Presidents should know, apply and communicate to their staffs the difference between acceptable information activities and inappropriate campaign activities in support of or in opposition to an initiative.</p> <p>The college may make facilities available on a nondiscriminatory, equal access basis for political uses or make an objective and fair presentation of facts relevant to a ballot proposition, if such action is part of the normal and regular conduct of the college.</p> <p>As a citizen, a president may take a position on an initiative and get involved in supporting or opposing an initiative. In taking a position or getting involved in a campaign, the president should take off his/her "president's hat" and take leave when appropriate.</p> |
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| <p><b>College employees (college administrators/faculty/staff)</b></p> | <p>College employees cannot use college staff, facilities, equipment, vehicles, computers, mail, agency publications, or mailing lists to support or oppose an initiative.</p> <p>In their respective roles, college employees may not coerce, pressure or subject subordinate employees or students to undue influence to participate in a political activity or to take a particular position.</p> | <p>As citizens, state employees may take a position on an initiative and get involved in a campaign to support or oppose an initiative. In taking a position or getting involved in a campaign, the state employee should not refer to his/her “state employee” role and should take leave when appropriate.</p> <p>A college may make facilities available on a nondiscriminatory, equal access basis for political uses or make an objective and fair presentation of facts relevant to a ballot proposition, if such action is part of the normal and regular conduct of the college.</p> <p>May place window signs or bumper stickers on their privately-owned cars, even if those cars are parked in college parking lots during working hours.</p> <p>May accommodate signature gatherers on campus if college policies provide for this type of activity in a designated “forum area” under specific conditions and subject to applicable rental requirements.</p> |
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**College Students**

College students cannot use college staff, facilities, equipment, vehicles, computers, mail, agency publications, or mailing lists to support or oppose an initiative.

As citizens, college students may take a position on an initiative and get involved in a campaign to support or oppose an initiative. In taking a position or getting involved in a campaign, college students who are also college employees or student government officers should not use their employee or "student government officer" role.

Students may make facilities available on a nondiscriminatory, equal access basis for political uses or make an objective and fair presentation of facts relevant to a ballot proposition, if such action is part of the normal and regular conduct of the college.

May place window signs or bumper stickers on their privately-owned cars, even if those cars are parked in college lots during working hours.

May encourage other students to vote and host voter registrations on campus.