

**Council on Postsecondary Education  
State of Rhode Island**

**Policy Number**

P-11

**Policy Title**

Public Office-Holding Policy

**Policy History**

Adopted: 09/20/1984 (BG)

Technical Revisions: 03/14/2024 (OPC)

**Legal Citation**

R.I.G.L. § 16-59-4

**Policy**

It is the policy of the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) to permit public office-holding by its employees when the individual involved in the opinion of the president of the institution concerned 1) can continue to perform satisfactorily his/her job responsibilities; and 2) when no conflict of interest is created by the holding of the faculty/staff appointment and the public office.

**A. Political campaign**

Members of the faculty and staff may campaign for any public office without modification of the terms and conditions of their institutional status if the campaign does not interfere (in any way deemed significant by the president) with the performance of assigned institutional duties. If the campaign does interfere with the performance of assigned institutional duties, the individual must resign from his or her position or petition for a leave of absence without salary from academic or other non-administrative duties. Absent extraordinary circumstances, a leave of absence from administrative duties will not be granted to campaign for an elective public office. Any leave of absence granted by the president pursuant to this policy shall be consistent with the provisions governing unpaid leaves of absence contained in the applicable collective bargaining agreement. In all campaign activities, the employee's relationship to the institution may not be exploited, either directly or indirectly.

**B. Election or appointment**

If elected or appointed, a member of the faculty or staff may accept a public office (e.g., membership on a town council, a local school board) that does not interfere with the individual's performance of assigned institutional duties without modification of the terms and conditions of his or her status.

If elected or appointed to an office that would interfere (in any way deemed significant by the president) with the performance of assigned duties, the individual must resign from his or her position, or petition for leave of absence without salary from academic or other non-

administrative duties. Absent extraordinary circumstances, a leave of absence from administrative duties will not be granted to serve in an elective or appointive public office. Again, any leave of absence granted shall be consistent with the provisions of the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

#### C. Political endorsements

Effective democracy provides the right of every private citizen to endorse a specific political candidate or cause. However, such endorsement should not interfere with or reflect the support of the institution for such political candidate or cause. Except for the limited purpose of identifying the institution as the employer of the faculty or staff member making a political endorsement, the name of the institution is not to be connected with such an endorsement in any way. No endorsement shall be made on the official stationery of the institution, nor on stationery having the institution's address or telephone number.

#### D. Application

This policy applies to all faculty, non-classified and classified staff at the institutions, however, classified employees must also comply with RIGL §36-4-51 prohibiting, classified employees from campaigning for or holding any elective state office and comply with any applicable personnel rules established by the personnel administrator.