



FREEDOM OF SPEECH

September 29, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

In this momentous election season, many people are moved to express public support for the candidates and ballot initiatives they are backing. Whether or not we agree with the political views being expressed, the right to free speech should be respected by all. Educational institutions especially value free speech and dialogue as the basis of critical thinking. Freedom of speech and the right to engage in political activities are fundamental rights under the state and federal constitutions.

With a few exceptions, the political activities of public employees cannot be restricted. However, the District may establish rules to regulate engagement in political activity during working hours and on District premises. Restrictions may also be established to ensure that District officers and employees do not use their positions, or District resources, to engage in campaign activities and partisan politics.

Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District Board Policy 3900, Speech: Time, Place and Manner, states:

“The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District guarantees freedom of expression provided that such expression does not result in a disruption of the orderly operations of College and District programs and activities. It is the policy of the District to maximize the opportunity for free discussion and expression while minimizing the potential for disruption of classroom and College/District activities and interference with the ability of students to obtain an education.”

The District’s AP 3905, Political Activity, also states:

No restriction shall be placed on the political activities of any Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District Board member or employee of the District except as provided in board policy and these procedures.

No District funds, services, supplies, mailboxes, or other equipment may be used to urge the support or defeat of any ballot measure or candidate, including but not limited to any candidate for election to the Governing Board.

In general, employees may participate in political activities on campus as private citizens on non-work time as long as their activities do not involve the use of public funds.

Employees and visitors to our campuses also have the right to freedom of expression on campus, including the wearing of buttons, badges, or other insignia, and the displaying of political campaign materials on their vehicles, desks and in their offices. This freedom of expression is provided regardless of their particular political views, provided that such expression does not result in a disruption of the orderly operations of District programs and activities.

Any campaign activities on campus generally must take place in public spaces that are available to the general public, including sidewalks, lawns and plazas.

As an institution of higher education, we encourage involvement in the civic process, and we want to ensure that everyone can safely express their beliefs. The most important way to have your voice heard is to cast your ballot in the November 3 election. We remind you again to [register to vote](#) by October 19 if you haven't already, and do your part to contribute to our democracy.

Lynn Ceresino Neault, Ed.D
Chancellor, Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District

Nabil Abu-Ghazaleh, Ed.D.
President, Grossmont College

Julianna Barnes, Ed.D.
President, Cuyamaca College