

UFF General Election Guidance

In support of the #UFFVotes Statewide Get out the Vote (GOTV) campaign, here is a guide you can share with your leaders and members so that everyone feels comfortable and confident supporting GOTV across our state!

We are encouraging every UFF member to reach out to students this fall to ensure they are registered to vote and have a plan to cast their ballot!

YES! it is perfectly legal to...

- take class time to make announcements or remind students about where and how to register to vote, check their voter registration, and provide reminders about upcoming election deadlines and election sites
- Use Canvas, email, or other college/university controlled educational media platforms to make announcements about voting, registration, deadlines, and polling sites
- Add language to your syllabus encouraging voting
- Post flyers, where it is permitted, to encourage voting
- Talk about the importance of voting in nonpartisan terms, for example as a civic duty and right

However, it is not legal and/or not recommended to...

- Express voting information in a partisan manner – that is, be perceived as recommending candidates, parties, or positions on issues.
- Attempt to influence a student to vote in a particular way
- Likewise, do not give voting information while wearing clothes or buttons that endorse a candidate or position—and to be extra-careful, don't wear your union shirt that day, either.
- Do not make registering or voting a course requirement, or give course credit for voting. This is less a legal issue than a question of grading fairness: some of your students may not be eligible to vote.
- Do not physically collect anyone's voter registration form and submit it for them. Instead, please share the link to the website where students can register themselves to vote.

Commonly Asked Questions:

Q: Can you provide more detail about the level of protection we have and the rights we are afforded to safely discuss this in the physical or virtual classroom?

You can absolutely take a few minutes at the start or end of class to make an announcement and remind students about where and how to register to vote or check their voter registration, provide reminders about upcoming election deadlines and election sites. As long as you remain non-partisan and provide general information and reminders, you can also email reminders to your students, include election information and reminders on your syllabus, in your online course site, and can hang flyers in your office.

Q: During the FL legislative session, we never send out political information over school emails, so how is this outreach allowed?

A: During the legislative session we cannot perform expressed advocacy over institution emails. Making announcements about the election and upcoming registration deadlines is not expressed advocacy, and therefore you can make non-partisan announcements in class, on your Canvas or Blackboard course site, and can put up flyers in your office, as long as it remains non-partisan and you do not attempt to influence the way in which a student should vote.

Q: I understand that I cannot expressly advocate for any candidate when speaking with students. What about when speaking with other UFF members? Am I allowed to expressly advocate for a candidate in those conversations? What can I say to non-UFF member colleagues—faculty and staff?

You **should** speak with colleagues outside of work time and away from students about both political activities and candidate support or opposition. You **should not** use force, violence or intimidations or any tactic of coercion or intimidation to compel an individual to vote or not vote, vote for or against a specific candidate or to register or not register to vote. You **should not** solicit or accept contributions for a political committee or candidate inside a government owned building.

Q: What if a student asks me about how I personally am going to vote? What am I allowed to share?

You should avoid discussing candidates and issues directly with students. Instead, advise them how to do their own research and make the best decisions based on the issues which are important to them.

If you have any questions or concerns about the specific circumstances of advocating for GOTV on your campus, please contact Adela Ghadimi, UFF Service Unit Director, adela.ghadimi@floridaea.org.

The information shared here has been reviewed and authorized by FEA Legal Services and the FEA Public Policy and Advocacy Department to ensure appropriate, accurate legal guidance is being shared with all UFF members.