

POLITICAL ACTIVITY FAM 633.6

The Faculty of the California State University and Colleges is subject to provisions of the law covering elections and political activities applicable to all State residents and included within the Government Code of the State of California, Sections 19770-19775. A legal opinion issued by the Attorney General (May 18, 1953) reaffirms "that the right to engage in politics is a privilege of citizenship which should not be denied State employees in the absence of express or necessarily implied statutory prohibition, or unless the particular activity is harmful to the State Government. No political activity should be engaged in on State time." The following statement by the AAUP is also offered as a guide to practice:

1. The college or university faculty member is a citizen and, like other citizens, should be free to engage in political activities so far as he is able to do so consistently with his obligations as a teacher and scholar.
2. Many kinds of political activity (e.g., holding part-time office in a political party, seeking election to any office under circumstances that do not require extensive campaigning, or serving by appointment or election in a part-time political office) are consistent with effective service as a member of a faculty. Other kinds of political activity (e.g., intensive campaigning for elective office, serving in a State Legislature, or serving a limited term in a full-time position) will often require that the professor seek a leave of absence from his college or university.
3. In recognition of the legitimacy and social importance of political activity by professors, universities and colleges should provide institutional arrangements to permit it, similar to those applicable to other public or private extramural service. Such arrangements may include the reduction of the faculty member's workload or a leave of absence for the duration of an election campaign or a term of office, accompanied by equitable adjustment of compensation when necessary.
4. A faculty member seeking leave should recognize that he has a primary obligation to his institution and to his growth as an educator and scholar; he should be mindful of the problem which a leave of absence can create for his administration, his colleagues, and his students; and he should not abuse the privilege by too frequent or too late application or too extended a leave. If adjustments in his favor are made, such as a

reduction of workload, he should expect them to be limited to a reasonable period.

5. A leave of absence incident to political activity should come under the institution's normal rules and regulations for leaves of absence. Such a leave should not affect unfavorably the tenure status of a faculty member, except that time spent on such leave from academic duties need not count as probationary service. The terms of a leave and its effect on the professor's status should be set forth in writing.