

Office of the President

TO MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND THE COMPLIANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE:

ACTION ITEM

For Meeting of January 24, 2024

ADOPTION OF REGENTS POLICY ON USE OF UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATIVE WEBSITES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University establishes administrative websites and other official channels of communication to conduct the business of the University. When individual or group viewpoints or opinions on matters not directly related to the official business of the unit are posted on these administrative websites, it creates the potential that the statements and opinions will be mistaken as the position of the institution itself. To avoid the potential for confusion between individual or group viewpoints and the University's speech and views, the University proposes to adopt a policy regarding the use of administrative websites and other official channels of communication, which is attached as Attachment 1.

RECOMMENDATION

The President of the University recommends to the Compliance and Audit Committee and the Academic and Student Affairs Committee that they recommend to the Regents that the Regents adopt a new Regents Policy on Use of University Administrative Websites, as shown in [Attachment 1](#).

BACKGROUND

The University establishes administrative websites and other official channels of communication maintained by its schools, departments, centers, units, and other entities to conduct the business of the University and these entities. Examples of an entity's official business may include delivering informational resources about the unit, such as course descriptions, and communicating personnel changes, dates of upcoming events, the release of new publications, the issuance of new policies, and similar activities. Expressions of the personal or collective opinions of unit members or of the entity is not the official business of the entity. Other means of publicly conveying such opinions are available.

Individual or group statements that are posted on the University's official channels of communication are likely to be interpreted by the public and the community as the University's institutional views, as opposed to individual or group speech. To avoid any such confusion, the proposed Regents Policy would provide that the official channels of communication to conduct the business of the University should not be used for purposes of publicly expressing the personal or collective opinions of unit members or of the entity.

Freedom of speech is a fundamental value of the University of California, and the University is committed to protecting free speech and academic freedom as vital elements of our democratic society. Members of the University community generally have broad free speech protections under the First Amendment, particularly when speaking out on matters of public concern. The proposed Regents Policy does not in any way limit the right and ability of members of the University community to make use of non-official channels of communication to express their individual or group views and opinions.