

Office of the President
September 12, 2025

Members of the Board of Trustees:

A UNIVERSITY POLICY ON INSTITUTIONAL NEUTRALITY

Recommendation: that the University of Kentucky Board of Trustees adopt as policy of the University a position of institutional neutrality as prescribed in House Bill 4 of the 2025 regular session of the General Assembly. In accordance with House Bill 4 the University's policy with respect to institutional neutrality:

- Prohibits discrimination on the basis of an individual's political or social viewpoint and promotes intellectual diversity within the institute and;
- Ensures that an amended policy is prominently published in the University's student and faculty handbooks, as well as on a publicly accessible webpage of the institution's website.

Background: In August 2024, President Eli Capilouto communicated with the UK community several policy changes related to issues surrounding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). The policy changes resulted from conversations with dozens of members of the campus community, as well as with state legislators, regarding concerns around DEI.

Among those policy changes was the creation and implementation of a University-wide policy of institutional neutrality. That policy was outlined in a message to the campus community on August 20, 2024, in which President Capilouto stated:

We will be impartial facilitators as an institution of broad perspectives. *When we take a position, as an institution, on a partisan or political issue, we threaten the ability of everyone in our community to feel a sense of belonging and an opportunity to join the debate. Institutional policies will make clear that we will be impartial on current events, reserving official statements for issues that directly and broadly impact our community.*

Websites will be free of political positions as a way of ensuring impartiality. *We will eliminate statements that imply that the institution or unit has an official view on a current event.*

In addition, a policy paper — the *Institutional Statements Policy* — was published on the UK website¹.

That policy, in part, states:

The university does not take official positions on or issue public statements about societal issues and events that do not directly impact the mission or function of the university. The university may issue public statements about internal issues or events at the institution as well external issues and events that directly impact the university's operations or ability to pursue its mission.

Finally, the ability for the President of the institution to prescribe such policies is described in the University's governing regulations, which in *Governing Regulation I.A.3*ⁱⁱ state:

As the University is complex, it is necessary for the Board to delegate administrative authority over day-to-day operations to the President. In exercising administrative authority, the President is accountable to the Board. The Board may remove the President at any time in accordance with the President's contract.

Specific Action: To eliminate potential confusion and to ensure clarity around the University's intent with respect to this issue, the Board of Trustees is moving to formally endorse and adopt the policy of institutional neutrality, in accordance with House Bill 4 and as outlined and implemented by President Capilouto in August 2024.

ⁱ See, e.g., [Institutional Statements Policy](#)

ⁱⁱ See, e.g., [Governing Regulations I.A.3](#)

Action taken: ☒ Approved ☐ Disapproved ☐ Other _____