



## **State University of New York Faculty Guide to Federal Lobbying Rules:**

### **Things to keep in mind:**

- In coordination with the campus Federal Relations Office, faculty members are permitted to communicate with Federal agencies, members of Congress, or congressional staff in relation to federal research grants or contracts in order to seek support for their own research. Each SUNY campus has an obligation to make a good-faith estimate of expenses associated with lobbying activities, even if engaged in by non-lobbyists. Therefore, **any** “lobbying activities” that do occur between faculty members and members of Congress, and **any** related expenditures, **must** be reported to the college/university for use in its required reporting. This is among the reasons that coordination with the campus Federal Relations Office is critical. Federal Relations contacts are listed here: <http://www.suny.edu/GovtRelations/federal/campuscontacts.cfm>.
- Public colleges and universities are exempt from Congressional gift and travel restrictions. Thus, for example, a state university may provide a member of Congress with tickets to a home football game without violating Federal lobbying laws regarding gift restrictions. However, **all such expenditures are reportable and must be included in the campus’s reports.**
- A faculty member may provide a member of Congress or staff with informational materials such as a copy of the faculty member’s published book or article, as long as they are not sent to the home of a member or staff. If multiple copies are provided, they should be clearly marked as intended for distribution to a particular audience.
- While public colleges and universities are exempt from gift restrictions, members of Congress or congressional staff may be reluctant to accept gifts that would otherwise be restricted by Federal lobbying laws (if given by someone outside of the public college and university context) and would not fit under a separate exception, for example: gifts based on personal friendship; food or refreshments of nominal value; admission to “widely attended events”; or gifts of little intrinsic value, such as baseball caps, greeting cards, and t-shirts from the college.
- **Caution: This guidance covers Federal lobbying. New York State law may differ.**

### **Things you cannot do:**

- No quid pro quo: Public universities may **not** lawfully provide a gift in exchange for past or future official action by a member of Congress or act as a conduit for a private entity’s gift. For example, a public university administrator or faculty member may send a thank you letter, but may **not** send a gift as a sign of thanks for a specific legislative action by a member of Congress.
- A member of Congress may not accept a gift from a public university’s outside lobbyist, even if the lobbyist receives reimbursement from the institution.
- A faculty member may not use official SUNY or campus letterhead, or his/her status as a faculty member, to advance a personal project.

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