

GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AND LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

1. General

Federal and state support is extremely important to the teaching, research, and public service mission of the College. Through this support, the College can enhance current programs and develop resources to support future programs. To ensure effective development and management of governmental support and compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, the College coordinates contact with elected officials through the College's Office of Institutional Advancement

2. Office of Institutional Advancement

With a comprehensive overview of the College's legislative activity, the Office of Institutional Advancement serves as a clearing house for legislative requests to ensure a consistent message of the College's priorities and to ensure legislators are not approached by multiple Northern constituents at the same time. The Office of Institutional Advancement establishes relationships with elected officials, matches requests for information with the appropriate Northern representatives, and works closely with students, faculty, and staff to ensure the College presents a unified image to the legislature.

2.1. Establishment of Northern's Legislative Priorities

2.2. The Office of Institutional Advancement will coordinate an inclusive and transparent process which provides students, faculty, and staff an opportunity to participate in the development of the College's priorities. This is a year-round process that includes open forums, committee meetings, and legislative hearings during the nine (9) months leading up to the legislative session. Therefore, it is important that students, faculty, and staff become involved early in the process so their concerns and suggestions can be effectively addressed at the appropriate stage of the priority setting process. Legislative priorities are approved by the Board of Regents, at the recommendation of the President.

2.3. Speaking or Acting on Behalf of the College

In the limited circumstances where individuals are authorized to speak or act on behalf of the College, they must notify the Office of Institutional Advancement to ensure compliance with federal and state laws and regulations regarding governmental, legislative, and political activities which include the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, the New Mexico Governmental Conduct Act, and the New Mexico Gift Act. Activities covered by these laws and regulations include not only actions that attempt to influence the action of any legislative body, or federal, state or local governmental agency, but also contact with certain senior officials, ministers, and other designated public office holders.

2.4. Notification of Contact with Elected Officials

The College encourages employees to have good professional relationships with state and federal elected officials and to be responsive to their questions and requests for

information. However, many contacts with elected officials may be considered by state and federal law to be official lobbying on behalf of the College. To ensure compliance with related laws and regulations and the accuracy and completeness of responses, it is important that employees notify the Office of Institutional Advancement before contacting elected officials.

3. Personal Opinions Expressed to Federal, State, and Local Officials

While all members of the College community are free to express their political opinions and engage in political activities to whatever extent they wish, it is very important that they do so only in their individual capacities; do not use College resources; and avoid the appearance that they are speaking or acting for the College in political matters. It can be difficult for members of the public, including reporters and legislators to differentiate between an official College position and a personal opinion; therefore, employees should take care to stipulate that the personal opinions expressed are their own and not necessarily those of the College. The College recognizes and approves the right of free speech and expression of opinion on any subject by any member of the College community, whether the subject relates to on-campus or off-campus issues.