

Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State Colleges

Governance and Administration

POLICY
NAME: Religious Activities

POLICY
NUMBER: 2820

A. PURPOSE

To establish the legal duty to refrain from excessive entanglement with religion but to encourage and promote the public duty to provide an open forum for the free expression and exchange of thoughts and ideas.

B. DEFINITIONS

None

C. POLICY

1. Religious Activities

The Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Nebraska require that the State Colleges refrain from activities which either inhibit or promote any particular religion or sect. As public institutions, the Nebraska State Colleges have a legal duty to refrain from excessive entanglement with religion. However, as postsecondary institutions of higher learning, the State Colleges have a public duty to be at the forefront of our society in providing an open forum for the free expression and exchange of thoughts and ideas. It is the purpose and intent of the Board of Trustees in this policy to encourage and promote the latter duty to the maximum extent possible.

- 1.1. Teaching and study involving religions in a secular, philosophical, historical, or cultural content are appropriate within the State College community.
- 1.2. Non-sectarian invocations, benedictions, or moments of silent meditation shall be permitted at College functions.
- 1.3. The State Colleges shall not discriminate on the basis of religion in its personnel policies, and reasonable efforts shall be made by the State Colleges to accommodate work schedules to meet the needs of employees in their personal religious activities.

- 1.4. There shall be no interference with personal religions which are confined to private living quarters within State College housing facilities.
- 1.5. College buildings and facilities shall not be used for religious services, except for the rental of space in State College buildings for occasional religious services as provided in Section 1.7 of this Policy. The foregoing shall not be construed to prohibit or interfere with the regular use of appropriate State College buildings and facilities by any student organization or other State College organization for social, cultural, educational, philosophical, business, entertainment, artistic, musical, or athletic activities.
- 1.6. The term "religious services" as used in this Policy shall be narrowly construed and shall refer only to the use of State College buildings or facilities by any group or organization for the primary purpose of conducting religious ceremonies, religious exercises or religious rituals.
- 1.7. The College Presidents may designate space within buildings under their respective jurisdictions which may be rented by any group or organization for occasional religious services when such space is not required for institutional purposes; provided that such space shall not be rented for the regular recurring religious services of any particular group or organization.
- 1.8. The authority and jurisdiction for administration and enforcement of this Policy is vested in each College President.

FORMS/APPENDICES

None

SOURCE:

Policy Adopted: March 1994

Policy Revised: April 2022