

Frequently Asked Questions Federal and State Government Lobbying Policy

1. Why has Goucher implemented a lobbying policy?

In December 2007, the federal Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 was amended by the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007. The amended statute requires the disclosure of the activities of paid lobbyists to affect decisions in the executive and legislative branches of the federal government.

Organizations, including colleges and universities, that spend at least \$10,000 in a quarter and that have one or more employees who are lobbyists, as defined in the legislation, are required to register and report the lobbying activities of all of their employees.

The Maryland Public Ethics Law, which was enacted by the Maryland General Assembly, requires paid lobbyists to report lobbying activities two times per year to the State Ethics Commissions.

In 2008, Congress passed The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, which prohibits the use of federal funds received under the Higher Education Act of 1965 from being used in certain lobbying activities.

The purpose of this policy is to implement the provisions of the Lobbying Disclosure Act, as amended, the Maryland Public Ethics Law, and the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 at Goucher College, and to define the rights and responsibilities of Goucher employees who represent the needs of the college to the federal and state government.

2. Who is authorized to lobby on behalf of Goucher College?

Only the President is authorized to act on behalf of Goucher College when conducting lobbying activities with the federal or state government. Other employees (faculty, administrators, staff) and students may engage in lobbying activities on behalf of the college if they are designated in writing by the President to represent the institution for purposes of a specific contact. This is to ensure that the college's position on federal and state legislation is presented in a consistent manner and that the college accurately reports all lobbying activities, as required by the federal and state statutes.

3. Can I contact government officials on my own behalf or on behalf of other organizations to which I belong, including professional associations?

Of course. This policy is not intended to restrict the rights of college employees to petition the government or to prevent employees from identifying their profession and place of employment in the context of their communication with federal or state officials. However, in exercising this right, college employees must make it clear that they are expressing their personal views, and not an official position of the institution. Similarly, if employees choose to lobby federal or state officials on behalf of a professional association to which they belong, they are free to do so, provided that they make clear that they are expressing the views of the association and not of the college. In addition, college employees who are making personal lobbying contacts with federal or state officials or lobbying contacts on behalf of a professional association may not use Goucher resources (stationary, telephones, fax and/or photocopy machines, computers, or other equipment) for such purpose.

4. What do I have to do if I want to lobby on behalf of the college?

You must contact the President's office if you want to be given authority to lobby on behalf of the college. If the President authorizes you to lobby on behalf of the college, you will be required to maintain a record of your time spent on lobbying activities and expenses that you incur in lobbying, and you may be required to register as a lobbyist if you meet the threshold requirements in the statutes. You should contact the President's office for the appropriate recordkeeping forms and more information.

5. Can I give gifts to my federal or state representatives?

If Goucher is required to register as a federal lobbyist in the future, most gifts to members of Congress or Congressional staff members from any employee of the college will be banned, including gifts under the amount of \$50. In addition, college employees are not permitted to provide gifts using personal funds, even if the college does not reimburse them. Congress has provided some exceptions to these rules, but they are limited.

Consequently, to ensure that Goucher is able to verify its compliance with these rules, whether or not it is required to register as a federal lobbyist, all employees of the college must obtain written approval from the President prior to providing a gift in any amount to a member of Congress or a Congressional staff member, even if the gift is provided with personal funds. This requirement extends to all gifts, including paying for meals or providing refreshments in on-campus meetings.

The rules relating to providing gifts and meals to state representatives and executive officials are less restrictive than the federal rules, but are complicated, nonetheless. If you would like to give a gift to a state representative, or provide refreshments at a campus event for state legislators, please contact the President's office prior to doing so in order to ensure that you are not violating the provisions of state law.

6. Who should I talk to if I have any questions about the new policy?

You should contact the [President's office](#) if you need additional information about this policy.