

**Advance Ohio Higher Education Act, 7.16**  
**Chapter 7: General Administrative**

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**Responsible Office: Human Resources and Academic Affairs****Applies to:** Faculty, Staff, Students, and Third-Party Contractors**Approved:** 09/24/2025

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**Policy:** This policy is to affirm Rhodes State College's commitment to academic freedom, intellectual diversity, and the free exchange of ideas while ensuring full compliance with the law and is intended to prohibit specific practices pursuant to the Advance Ohio Education Act.

**Guidelines:****I. Definitions:**

- a. **Controversial Belief:** Any belief or policy that is the subject of political controversy, including issues such as climate policies, electoral politics, foreign policy, diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, immigration policy, marriage, or abortion.
- b. **Intellectual Diversity:** Multiple, divergent, and varying perspectives on an extensive range of public policy issues.

**II. Prohibited Practices:**

- a. Orientation and Training on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Concepts:  
Any orientation or training course regarding DEI, unless the institution submits a written request for an exception to the Chancellor of Higher Education because the institution determines the orientation or training course is exempt from this prohibition because all aspects of the orientation or course are required to:
  - i. Comply with state or federal laws or regulations;
  - ii. Comply with state or federal professional licensure requirements; or
  - iii. Obtain or retain accreditationThe exception request must include an explanation of the circumstances and the effort made by the institution to comply with the bill.
- b. DEI Office or Departments
  - i. Continuation of existing DEI offices or departments
  - ii. Establishment of new DEI offices or departments
- c. DEI in Employment Practices
  - i. Inclusion of DEI roles or requirements in job descriptions
  - ii. Political and ideological litmus tests in all hiring, promotion and admissions decisions, including diversity statements and any other requirement that applicants describe their commitment to any ideology, principle, concept, or formulation that requires commitment to any controversial belief or policy
- d. Third-Party Contractors
  - i. Contracting with consultants or third parties to promote hiring, admissions, or promotion on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.
- e. Scholarships
  - i. Creation of new institutional scholarships using any DEI criteria.

- ii. Continuation of existing DEI-based scholarships shall be eliminated where possible. If donor restrictions prevent changes, no new funding may be accepted for such scholarships.
- f. Replacement with Equivalent Structures
  - i. The College shall not replace any orientation, training, office or position designated for the purpose of DEI that is prohibited with an orientation, training, office or position under a different designation that serves the same or similar purposes, or that uses the same or similar means.
- g. Research Grants
  - i. If grant compliance conflicts with DEI prohibitions, the institution will seek legal guidance to comply as far as possible while retaining grant eligibility.
  - ii. If unable to comply, a written exception request must be submitted to the Chancellor that includes an explanation of circumstances and the effort made by the College to comply with the bill's DEI prohibitions while retaining eligibility for the research grant.
  - iii. Prohibitions do not apply to agreements or contracts regarding any research grants entered into prior to the bill's effective date. They do apply to any renewal of such agreements or contracts occurring on or after that date.

### III. Institutional Affirmations

The College affirms and declares:

- a. Its primary function is to support discovery, improvement, transmission, and dissemination of knowledge through research, teaching, discussion, and debate.
- b. It shall ensure the fullest degree of intellectual diversity, including the encouragement of students to reach their own conclusions regarding controversial issues. Faculty and staff shall not seek to indoctrinate students into specific political, social, or religious ideologies.
- c. It shall demonstrate intellectual diversity for course approval, approval of courses to satisfy general requirements, student course evaluations, common reading programs, annual reviews, strategic goals for each department and student learning outcomes.
- d. It shall not endorse or oppose any controversial belief or policy, except where necessary to protect funding or mission of discovery, improvement, and dissemination of knowledge.
- e. It shall not encourage, discourage, require or forbid students, faculty or administrators to endorse, assent to, or publicly express a given ideology, political stance, or view of social policy, nor will the institution require students to do any of those things to obtain a degree.
- f. It shall not use diversity statements or assess political or ideological views during hiring, promotion, or admissions processes.
- g. No hiring, promotion, or admissions process or decision shall encourage, discourage, require or forbid students, faculty or administrators to endorse, assent to, or publicly express a given ideology or political stance.
- h. No process regulating conditions of work or study (e.g., course scheduling, committee assignments, workload adjustments) may encourage or discourage expression of political or ideological beliefs.
- i. The institution will seek out speakers with diverse political and ideological viewpoints.
- j. Speaker fees and honoraria exceeding \$500 shall be posted on the institution's website:

- i. Within three clicks from the homepage;
- ii. Searchable by keywords; and
- iii. Viewable without registration or login

#### **IV. Academic Freedom**

This policy does not restrict:

- a. Faculty or students from classroom instruction, discussions or debates, so long as faculty members allow students to express intellectual diversity;
- b. Compliance with disability accommodations or recognition of national/state holidays, U.S. or Ohio law, or the display of the American or Ohio flag; or
- c. Student organization operations, including fraternities or sororities.

#### **V. Complaint Process**

The procedure for accepting and investigating complaints is outlined in the Advance Ohio Higher Education Act Procedure 7.16(a).

#### **VI. Reporting Requirements**

- a. In accordance with the guidelines established by the Chancellor, the College will issue a report regarding:
  - i. All violations of the disciplinary sanctions implemented for violation of the above-described training prohibition and
  - ii. Statistics on the academic qualifications of accepted and matriculating students, disaggregated by race and sex. The statistics must include information correlating students' academic qualifications and retention rates, disaggregated by race and sex.
  - iii. The report will be posted on the Ohio Department of Higher Education's website.

#### **VII. Non-Compliance**

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with [Disciplinary Action and Due Process Policy 5.5](#) and the College may subject the institution to loss or reduction of state funding as determined by the General Assembly.

#### **Related Policies or Procedures:**

Advance Ohio Higher Education Act Procedure 7.16(a).

[Disciplinary Action and Due Process Policy 5.5](#)

#### **Compliance References:**

[Ohio Senate Bill 1](#)

**History:**

	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Reason:</b>
<b>Issued:</b>	09/24/2025	Board of Trustee Approval
<b>Revised:</b>	MM/DD/YY	

*This policy and / or procedure provides operating principles for Human Resources issues at Rhodes State College. It supersedes any prior policy covering specific subject. This policy and / or procedure may be suspended, modified or cancelled as determined by the College. This policy and / or procedure does not create a contract of employment, nor is it a condition of employment between the College and its employees.*