

ADDRESSING STATE ETHICS ISSUES

First Principles

CWU has dozens of revenue sources, thousands of students, and thousands of employees. We operate under university policy, state administrative code, state and federal law, collective bargaining agreements, and grant and contract stipulations.

If our operating environment seems complex, that's because it is.

In spite of the red tape-filled world we work in, the answer to most "can I?" questions is "yes"—as long as you keep a few fundamental guidelines in mind.

1.) The color of money matters principle

More rules apply to "public" money than to non-public money. Consider everything "public" money unless it comes from University Advancement and the CWU Foundation. Residence Hall funds? Yes-public money. Wildcat Shop? Yes. Football tickets? Course fees? Dining and catering? Yes, yes, and yes.

2.) The "me" principle

Generally the answer is "no" as to whether you may conduct an activity—during work, with public funds—that is designed to benefit you personally or your friends and family. You may write a thank you note on publicly funded stationery because it promotes recruitment and public and private funding. You may not give your publicly purchased stationery to your mom because she thinks they're snazzy. Please see principle #3 for further clarification.

3.) The "de minimis" principle

It's ok to make very minor use of public resources for personal use: using the phone on your desk or your university email to remind your spouse to pick up a gallon of milk, to check on your sick mother, or to see if the pass is open. A special state law allows university personnel to make minor use of state facilities in the course of conducting research (the "safe harbor" provision).

4.) The "gifting" principle

You may not give away publicly funded services and items, or things created using public time or materials. However these things may be broadly distributed if they are intended to produce a return of some sort. "Returns" could include:

- Engagement with CWU by prospective students and alumni as a result of receiving marketing materials and merchandise.
- Attendance at a performance and a review in the newspaper by a reporter as a result of receiving a complimentary ticket.

APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES: Frequently asked questions about use of public resources.

Feeding employees and friends

It's ok to use public funds to cater a training carried out over food. But it's not ok to use public money to buy snacks for a party or because you're hungry. You do need to follow the appropriate process (<http://www.cwu.edu/resources-reports/cwup-2-40-200-state-funds-entertainment-public-relations-university-promotion-and-recruitment>). Please see principle #2.

Who gets to use university facilities?

Anyone may use university facilities. Generally, however, private groups have to pay whereas local, state, and federal government entities pay a reduced fee or no fee at all. The university may waive facilities fees. (See <http://www.cwu.edu/resources-reports/sites/cts.cwu.edu/resources-reports/files/documents/CWUR3-40-380>)

Can I sell what I made?

Yes. If the thing you produced was made with public resources on public time you may sell the thing if it benefits the public: scholarships, program funding, etc. If you made the thing with de minimis use of state resources, on your own time and it only will benefit you, you may sell it, but not on the university web site.

Who can perform work on university buildings and grounds?

The university provides funding for facilities staff to perform basic maintenance and repair of university facilities. If something's broken, they fix it. They perform improvements needed to preserve facilities and ensure a safe and healthful environment for students and employees. If something breaks or is falling apart call the facilities work control desk at 509-963-3000.

Everything else is "self-supported." For example, if paint is peeling from a wall, Facilities may pay to repaint; if you prefer a new wall color, you pay. Putting up a picture isn't necessary to preserve a building -- although it can damage a wall. That's why you pay to have facilities staff to hang a picture.

Staff at Facilities Management provide cost estimates for work to be done. It's not like hiring a contractor to work on your house. Because we're a state agency, we have to follow state rules for contracting, for building standards, and other factors that can push up costs.

If you think someone else can do the work for less money you may be able to hire a contractor through the "competitive contracting" process. If the work you need has not historically been performed by our civil service staff, then you are free to contract with whosoever you please. If your work is a typical part of someone's job here, then purchasing will help you put together a bid that goes to our civil service staff as well as contractors. *Regardless of whether or not civil service employees are performing the work*, the first step is to call the purchasing office (963-1004) and tell them what you have in mind.
