

Protest and Advocacy FAQs

Please note: *While these FAQs address questions submitted by faculty members, in most instances the responses apply to all members of the Einstein community, whether faculty, staff, or student. Where information or requirements may differ—for example, regarding medical or graduate student policies—we indicate the specific differences. If no such distinction is noted in a response, the information applies to all members of our campus.*

Q: As a member of the Einstein community, am I allowed to create a social media post that advocates for a certain policy or supports a particular movement?

A: Yes, you are, but you must make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of Einstein. Einstein's Social Media Guidelines (from the department of communications and public affairs) note that "employees may associate themselves with Einstein when posting, but must provide a clear disclaimer that their online posts are personal and purely their own." This is especially critical when an individual may be posting content that is political in nature. Please review the complete guidelines for additional information.

If you are an administrator for an official Einstein social media account, you are not permitted to make overt political statements on that account. Because Einstein is a tax-exempt entity, it is prohibited from engaging in political activity and does not make campaign contributions or endorse candidates. For this reason, political campaign contributions may not be solicited on the premises and Einstein resources, such as stationery, email, telephone, and fax, may not be used for political campaigns.

In general, members of the Einstein community may not speak or post on Einstein's behalf without prior written authorization from the associate dean for communications and public affairs. If it is not clear whether an employee or student is speaking on behalf of Einstein or on his or her own behalf, the individual should clarify that the views expressed are personal views and not necessarily those of Einstein.

Q: As a member of the Einstein community, am I allowed to make a statement to the media that advocates for a certain policy or supports a particular movement?

A: If individuals wish to speak to the media for themselves on particular policies or movements, not in their capacity as spokespersons for Einstein, they must make clear that the opinions stated are their own. According to our Use of Name Policy: "Use of a faculty title in connection with any political, community, or philanthropic activity must clearly indicate that it is solely for identification purposes and does not imply institutional support or endorsement."

In order for any individual to act as an official representative and/or spokesperson for the College of Medicine, Einstein's prior approval is required. All media requests should be

forwarded to our [media relations team](#) and are subject to approval by the associate dean for communications and public affairs.

Q: If I see a social media post from a member of the Einstein community that I feel has racist, sexist, or homophobic language or concepts, what can I do?

A: Our [Social Media Policy](#) (as noted on page 16 of our Employee Handbook) prohibits members of the Einstein community from creating social media posts that are unlawful, libelous, or obscene; that amount to harassment or bullying; that reveal proprietary company information; or that violate [Title IX Gender-Based Misconduct, Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedures for Students](#) or [Title IX Gender-Based Misconduct, Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedures for Employees and Non-Students](#). The same applies to verbal expressions, posting of signage, and similar forms of public expression.

If you have any concerns regarding another community member's social media posts or other forms of public expression, please notify Einstein's Title IX coordinator at yvonne.ramirez@einsteinmed.edu. The Title IX coordinator will evaluate all complaints and address them accordingly.

Q: I am a staff/faculty member and I have been approached to speak at or about a protest event. May I do that?

A: Yes, you may. New York State law permits lawful off-duty conduct, including activities considered "political" (such as running for office, campaigning for a candidate, or participating in fundraising) or "recreational" (such as protests). The state statute forbids employers from discriminating against individuals because of their political activities or lawful recreational activities *outside working hours*, so long as those activities take place off the employer's premises and without use of the employer's equipment or other property and do not interfere with or disrupt productivity and operations in the workplace.

Q: I'm planning to participate in a protest event. May I wear clothing that has the Einstein logo, such as my white coat?

A: In general, Einstein resources such as supplies, equipment, uniforms, and/or funds should be used only for legitimate business purposes or activities *sponsored or endorsed by Einstein*. On occasion, the College of Medicine may choose to sponsor or endorse events that are considered to further the College of Medicine's ideals supporting issues of social and racial justice.

While supporting activities that Einstein has endorsed, members of the Einstein community may be permitted to wear Einstein gear or to use Einstein resources, such as white coats or school banners. These resources should be used responsibly and effectively. A white coat can

be a powerful tool but may not be appropriate in nonhealth or nonscience contexts. Additionally, any funds must be used for legitimate business purposes of Einstein; research funds may be used only for their designated purposes.

To investigate whether Einstein has endorsed an event or activity, please contact Dr. Benfield's office or email fanta.sissoko@einsteinmed.edu.

Q: I have been arrested as part of a peaceful protest. What should I do?

A: If you are an employee and are arrested while taking part in a peaceful protest, you should consult an attorney. If you're convicted of a misdemeanor or felony, immediately seek the advice of counsel and notify Einstein's senior counsel and human resources department for review and determination.

Depending on the charges connected to your arrest, you may be required to immediately inform the dean or director of your program and any applicable committee for student promotions and professional standards. Failure to do so can be grounds for dismissal, so please be sure to understand your responsibilities if such a situation were to arise.

If you are a medical student, in the case of an arrest it is strongly recommended that you contact the office of student affairs (OSA) for support and guidance. Our [Student By-Laws](#) (page 20) concerning professional misconduct and ethical behavior state: "Any student arrested should immediately inform the OSA. Failure to do so is grounds for dismissal."

Medical students may also want to review the sections of the by-laws detailing "Physician as Advocate" and "Physician as Role Model," as these may help guide your protest and advocacy goals and can offer helpful reminders.

In the event of arrest, graduate students should contact both human resources and the deans or directors of their programs.

If you are not a U.S. citizen and you are arrested, you should consult with an immigration attorney immediately.

Please note: In the event individuals are arrested as part of a peaceful protest, students and employees are responsible for their own legal costs; Einstein will *not* pay their legal costs.