

**3.2.4** The governing board is free from undue influence from political, religious, or other external bodies, and protects the institution from such influence. **(External influence)**

**Compliance Status:** Compliance

The Board of Regents is free from undue influence from political, religious or other external bodies and also protects the College of Coastal Georgia from such influence.

[Section 12.1](#) of the *Board of Regents Policy Manual* clearly provides the Board's view on the issue of political, religious, or external influences:

*The Board of Regents is unalterably opposed to political interference or domination of any kind or character in the affairs of any University System of Georgia institution.*

Additionally, the Constitution of the State of Georgia, Georgia law, and the *Bylaws of the Board of Regents* give the Board independence and exclusive authority over the government, control, and management of the University System. The Board's authority to govern, control, and manage the USG and each of its institutions is derived from [Article VIII, Section IV, Paragraphs 1\(a\) and 1\(b\)](#) of the *Constitution of the State of Georgia*, is reinforced by state law in *Official Code of Georgia Annotated*, [Sections 20-3-31](#) and [20-3-53](#), and is reiterated in [Section 1, Paragraph 2](#) of the *Bylaws of the Board of Regents*. The constitutional authority of the Board is especially detailed and explicit in relation to the financial matters and resources of the University System and its member institutions. In that regard, [Article VIII, Section IV, Paragraph 1\(c\)](#) of the *Constitution of the State of Georgia* provides:

*(c) All appropriations made for the use of any or all institutions in the university system shall be paid to the board of regents in a lump sum, with the power and authority in said board to allocate and distribute the same among the institutions under its control in such way and manner and in such amounts as will further an efficient and economical administration of the university system.*

Additionally, the "Code of Ethics for Government Service" (*Official Code of Georgia Annotated*, Sections [45-10-1](#), [45-10-20](#), and [45-10-22](#)), which prohibits such influence, applies to all elected and appointed public officials of the State of Georgia, including the Board of Regents.

The Board's composition is also a key factor in ensuring the representation of statewide interests in the affairs of the University System. As noted previously, [Article VIII, Section IV, Paragraph 1\(a\)](#) of the *Constitution of the State of Georgia* and [Article I, Section 3](#) of the *Bylaws of the Board of Regents* requires a majority of the Board's members to consist of representatives from each of Georgia's 13 Congressional districts. Similarly, the seven-year terms of Board members ensures representation across different gubernatorial administrations. The annual rotation of the chairmanship of the Board ([Article IV, Section 5](#) of the *Bylaws of the Board of Regents*) also minimizes the potential for control by a minority of the members.

The Board's monthly meetings, as well as the *Bylaws*, committee structures, and required actions by the Committee of the Whole ensure broad-based participation of the Board's membership in the business affairs of the University System. The requirements for any individual or group seeking an appearance before the Board are clearly defined in [Article III, Section 9](#) of the *Bylaws of the Board of Regents*. Further, the *Bylaws* clearly state that no individual member of the Board has the authority to commit the Board to a particular action ([Article V, Section 2](#)), although any member may propose any action at any time, subject to the procedural rules listed in [Article III, Section 5](#) of the *Bylaws of the Board of Regents*. Finally, [Article III, Section 4](#) of the *Bylaws of the Board of Regents* requires that a majority of the members of the Board is needed to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

All of these features of the Board's make-up and operation serve to protect the University System and its member institutions from the undue influence of special interest groups.

**Supporting Documentation**

[USG Board of Regents Policy Manual, Section 12.1](#)

[Constitution of the State of Georgia, Article VIII, Section IV, Paragraph 1](#)

[Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Section 20-3-31](#)

[Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Section 20-3-53](#)

[USG Bylaws of the Board of Regents, Section I, Paragraph 2](#)

[Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Section 45-10-1](#)

[Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Section 45-10-20](#)

[Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Section 45-10-22](#)

[USG Bylaws of the Board of Regents, Article I, Section 3](#)

[USG Bylaws of the Board of Regents, Article III, Section 5](#)

[USG Bylaws of the Board of Regents, Article III, Section 9](#)

[USG Bylaws of the Board of Regents, Article V, Section 2](#)

[USG Bylaws of the Board of Regents, Article IV, Section 5](#)

[USG Bylaws of the Board of Regents, Article III, Section 4](#)