



**City of Venice**  
*Administrative Services Department*

**Interoffice Memorandum**

DATE: February 27, 2017

TO: Ed Lavallee, City Manager

FROM: Alan Bullock, Director of Administrative Services

SUBJECT: Student Government Day, March 6, 2017

Please consider the following scenario, submitted by Administrative Services for the student assigned to us:

Scenario

The city has a policy that regulates employees' personal appearance. It addresses clothing, footwear and accessories. However, the policy does not address tattoos, piercings or hair color. There have been some recent instances where supervisors have felt that they should have been able to tell employees to cover tattoos, remove piercings or change hair color while on duty, but they have not been able to. The conflict here lies between the employees' personal rights to self-expression and the city's right to regulate its employees' personal appearance while on duty. The challenge is to draft and present to Council a proposed modification to the current policy that will strike the desired balance between these two conflicting interests, all done in view of shifting social norms and expectations.

Note – for the purposes of this exercise, consideration of the city's Fire and Police departments should be excluded since they have their own departmental policies that address this issue as relates to their personnel.

Reference

Current city policy is in the city's Personnel Procedures & Rules and reads as follows:

(see next page)

#### **1.42 DRESS CODE, UNIFORMS AND APPEARANCE**

*City employees must dress in an appropriate manner. The city provides uniforms and/or special clothing to certain employees based on department operational needs. This can include uniforms, clothing, footwear and accessories. When these items are provided, it is required that they be worn as both a matter of appearance and safety. The initial issue of uniforms, clothing and footwear, as well as the replacement of these items due to normal wear or irreparable damage resulting from the performance of official duties, may be furnished to city employees whose jobs require specific identity, or based on operational needs, subject to prior approval of the city manager.*

*Clothing which does not require approval of the city manager may be furnished to certain city employees including outer protective garments, such as smocks and aprons, which are worn over personal clothing, may be furnished to employees who work under conditions where their personal clothing is exposed to excessive soilage or wear due to the nature of the job. Other apparel may be provided for employees working in special areas as required on an occasional or as-needed basis. Protective personal equipment may be furnished to employees who perform duties with special hazards.*

*All uniforms, clothing and footwear shall be returned to the department when the employee separates from employment or moves to a position that does not require such items. The city reserves the right to determine whether an employee is dressed in an acceptable manner. If the city decides that an employee's dress is inappropriate for business, the city may require the employee to return home and change.*

CC: Lori Stelzer, City Clerk