

COLLEGE of CHARLESTON

OFFICIAL POLICY

3.5.1

Political Candidates, Parties and Campaigns

03/09/16

Policy Statement

Employees are not permitted to engage in political activities during work time or use institutional resources to conduct political activities, with the exception of faculty members who are acting as expert authorities in their fields and offering commentary and opinion. Employees are not permitted to use their College office or title to promote one candidate over another. All employees are expected to avoid behavior that might reasonably be construed as offering an official College endorsement of a political candidate or party. Specific requirements include:

Political Candidates

Candidates who are running for political office, or representatives of the campaign, are welcome to campus if they are invited and sponsored by the Office of the President, a registered student organization, or an academic department or program, subject to the following requirements:

1. Candidate activities should have a substantive educational purpose, in the form of an address, forum, or question-and-answer session.
2. Unless a candidate is invited by the Office of the President, hosting of political candidates for educational purposes is left to academic departments and programs or registered student organizations.
3. All sponsoring departments or organizations must notify the Department of Public Safety and the Division of Marketing and Communications of all on-campus events involving political candidates. If the Department of Public Safety determines that additional security is necessary, expenses for security must be paid for by the sponsoring department or group.
4. An academic department or program must also notify the appropriate dean if it wishes to sponsor a candidate's visit to campus. The sponsor also is responsible for securing venues and paying (or arranging payment for) all expenses related to the event. The Office of Institutional Events and/or Division of Marketing and Communications can assist in locating an appropriate venue and advising on logistical needs.

5. A student organization inviting a candidate to campus must adhere to the event procedures and permissions as required by the Division of Student Affairs. The student organization is responsible for securing venues and paying (or arranging payment for) all expenses related to the event.

6. The College reserves the right to require that a statement be made prior to the presentation of any speaker that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the institution or sponsoring group.

Political Parties and Campaigns

Registered student organizations may use college facilities for meetings, speeches and events involving political parties and campaigns. Use of space is subject to availability and approval by the venue managers, and events are subject to the proper event procedures and permissions as required by the Division of Student Affairs. Expenses are the responsibility of the sponsoring student organization.

In the interest of encouraging and maintaining the exchange of ideas, faculty members have the privilege to invite any guest speaker to their classes. If the nature of the guest's visit can reasonably be expected to cause a significant disturbance or protest affecting the safety or operation of campus business, faculty are asked to notify the Office of the Provost prior to the visit.

Off-campus political parties and campaigns are eligible for use of designated campus facilities to engage in informational campaign activities. Campaigns and parties that wish to set up informational tables are specifically permitted to use the Rivers Green area adjacent to Addlestone Library for such activities, and must contact the Division of Student Affairs to register to use the venue.

Campaign workers and volunteers are prohibited from placing partisan signage or banners related to off-campus political campaigns in or on the College grounds, unless such signage or banners are part of a college-sponsored event and limited to the immediate area where the event is taking place. Registered student organizations may distribute information regarding political candidates or issues as part of their mission to educate their fellow students.

Per IRS regulations, partisan editorial activities by student publications (whether or not they are supported by the College) are not restricted. Use of College facilities for political or campaign fund-raising purposes is prohibited. Student groups may not use College-sponsored operating funds to contribute to political campaigns.

Use of the campus mail service (other than U.S. mail), college mailing lists, college-provided office supplies, computers, telephones, facsimile machines, or copiers, for soliciting votes or campaign fundraising is prohibited. Campaign workers, including students, faculty and staff, are not permitted to engage in person-to-person solicitation of funds through the campus mail service.

Voter Drives

Organized voter registration activities, voter education campaigns and “get out the vote” drives are permitted on campus and in campus facilities, provided no attempt is made to advance or oppose individual candidates for office or a political party, or to promote a position on a initiative or referendum. Student organizations acting in their official capacity, and within the guidelines of the Division of Student Affairs, are permitted to promote candidates and political initiatives or causes.

Campus Safety

The Office of the President, in consultation with the Department of Public Safety, reserves the right to postpone or cancel any event that is deemed as presenting, or potentially presenting, a danger to the safety or security of the campus and/or the campus community.

Policy Manager and Responsible Department or Office

This policy provides general guidelines for employees and students of the College of Charleston who wish to invite to campus any political candidates, parties or campaigns for educational purposes. This policy does not provide legal advice. If there is any doubt about the permissibility of an activity, please contact the College’s legal counsel, or the Division of Marketing and Communications, for guidance.

Policy

As an institution of higher learning, the College of Charleston is committed to the free expression of political views by members of the campus community, and to the value of discourse and debate as an essential underpinning of our educational mission. At the same time, the College must also comply with the provisions governing its tax-exempt status under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and ensure that activities engaged in by members of the College community, or the College itself, do not call into question the College’s non-partisan, educational status. Federal statute stipulates that non-profit, tax-exempt institutions of higher education are prohibited from participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Departments/Offices Affected by the Policy

All College offices and departments.

Procedures Related to the Policy

All sponsoring departments or organizations must notify the Department of Public Safety and the Division of Marketing and Communications of all on-campus events involving political candidates. If the Department of Public Safety determines that additional security is necessary, expenses for security must be paid for by the sponsoring department or group. An academic department or program must also notify the appropriate dean if it wishes to sponsor a candidate's visit to campus. The sponsor also is responsible for securing venues and paying (or arranging payment for) all expenses related to the event. The Office of Institutional Events and/or the Division of Marketing and Communications can assist in advising on logistical needs. A student organization inviting a candidate to campus must adhere to the event procedures and permissions as required by the Division of Student Affairs. The student organization is responsible for securing venues and paying (or arranging payment for) all expenses related to the event.

Related Policies, Documents or Forms

This policy is not intended to limit personal political activities of students or employees. As a private citizen, employees are free to engage in political activities and support political candidates on their own time and with their own resources. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Human Resources for guidance.

Issue Date: July 1, 2009

Date of Policy Revision: March 9, 2016

Next Review Date: March 9, 2021

POLICY APPROVAL

(For use by the Office of the Board of Trustees or the Office of the President)

Policy Number:

President or

Chairman, Board of Trustees

John J. McQuinn, Pres. Date: 3-9-16