



Policy on Political Activities

Frostburg State University is committed to free and open discussion of ideas and opinions. As part of its dedication to active citizenship, the University encourages students, faculty, and staff to exercise their civic rights to participate as individuals in the political process. At the same time, no member of the University community should feel any institutional pressure to support a particular candidate or position.

As a tax-exempt entity, Frostburg State University is prohibited by federal law from participating in or attempting to influence campaigns for any elective public office or any political initiative (such as a public referendum). The University may not endorse a candidate or ballot proposal, provide, or solicit financial or other support for candidates or political organizations, or establish political action committees.

This policy is adopted by the University in an attempt to balance these competing considerations, based on advice of counsel and prevailing practices in the academic community.

Individual Involvement in Campaigns by Faculty and Staff

Faculty and staff who engage in political campaigns should do so in their individual capacity. If a faculty or staff member is listed as a supporter of a political campaign or initiative, it should be without mention of institutional affiliation, or with a disclaimer indicating that their actions and statements are their own and not those of the University. University staff and faculty should not engage in political activity at University functions or through official University publications. No employee should feel pressured by colleagues to contribute to, or perform tasks in support of, a political campaign.

If a member of the faculty or staff is running for political office, no campaign activities should be conducted on campus during the employee's working hours, in order to avoid the appearance of a University endorsement.

Use of Facilities and Resources

Use of University facilities and resources in support of a political candidate, party, referendum or political action committee (PAC) that could give the appearance that the University is supporting one candidate or position over another is not permitted.

Prohibited Uses

- Using official University stationery, wordmark, seal, email, telephones, computers, printers and copiers.
- Providing mailing lists, office space, telephones, photocopying, computers or other institutional resources.

- Posting a hyperlink on a University-administered website or social media platform to a candidate or campaign site or posting of political candidate related information on digital signage systems.

This list is only a sample of the type of uses that are prohibited. If you have questions, please contact one of the offices identified below.

Approved Uses

- Subject to the existing [University Facilities and Reservations Policy](#) on space usage and scheduling, recognized student organizations may use University facilities for partisan political purposes at existing rates for such organizations.
- If an appearance by a declared candidate for public office or a group supporting a public referendum is broadly publicized to nonmembers of the Frostburg State University community or is co-sponsored or paid for by outside organizations, the sponsors must rent the space from the University on the same terms that are available to any group wishing to use such space as established by the Frostburg State University Event Services. If space is rented to a candidate in an election, any competing candidate would be able to rent space on the same terms.
- Candidates may be invited to appear on campus in a non-candidate capacity, e.g., to participate in a class, provided that no campaigning or fundraising is done at the event and a non-partisan atmosphere is maintained. Faculty and staff must notify the University Center and Event Services Office when a candidate is invited to campus in a non-candidate capacity.
- Candidate forums or debates may be held on campus as part of the University's educational mission if all qualified candidates are invited to participate.
- Faculty and staff should take special care in relation to any above-described activities, to avoid the appearance of institutional endorsement.

Fundraising

Funds or contributions for political candidates or campaigns may not under any circumstances be solicited in the name of Frostburg State University or on any University campus, and University resources may not be used in soliciting such funds. If Frostburg State University students, faculty or staff make political contributions, they must do so as individuals.

Student Publications

Student publications may run editorials expressing the editors' views on candidates for public office, provided that the publication's editorial policy is free of editorial control by University administrators or faculty advisors. A statement on the editorial page must indicate that the views expressed are those of the student editors and not those of the University.

Voter Registration

Voter registration and "get out the vote" drives by University-sponsored organizations must be done on a non-partisan basis (i.e., they may not focus on a particular party).

Gifts and Lobbying

Federal and Maryland laws prohibit gifts and honoraria for public officials, including meals and tickets to sporting events.

Any advocacy on behalf of the University must be approved by the Vice President for Regional Development and Engagement.

Contact Information

Should you have any questions relating to this policy, please contact the University Center and Event Services office at 301.687.7399 or the Office of Regional Development and Engagement at 301.687.3017

*This policy only provides **basic** information regarding political activities. It is strongly advised that you seek guidance from the University Center and Event Services Office before you sponsor a political event. For additional guidance on political activities, please see the [American Council on Education \(ACE\) Memo on Political Campaign-Related Activities of and at Colleges and Universities](#).*