

## **Political Activities Policy**

### **Purpose**

The University of Mary is committed to the free and open discussion of ideas and opinions and promotes participation in political activities (defined below) by members of the university community as a means of furthering the university's educational goals. At the same time, as a non-profit, private institution of higher education whose activities are regulated in part by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, the university itself is prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in any political campaign on behalf of or against any candidate for elective public office. Accordingly, no university school, department, or university organization, and no member of the university community speaking for the university may advocate for or against a candidate for elective office (defined below) or use university resources to do so.

This policy provides general guidance for faculty, staff, and students so that they may engage fully in the political process. It also provides guidelines for permissible appearances of candidates on campus.

The university reserves the right to support the tenets of Catholic social teaching in a non-partisan manner.

No policy can anticipate every situation that may arise. Accordingly, if any proposed activity is not covered in this policy, or if there is any uncertainty regarding that activity, it is important to contact the Office of Public Affairs (701-355-8262) in advance so appropriate guidance can be provided.

### **Definitions**

- *Campaign* means an organized effort to influence individuals and/or groups to elect a particular candidate or candidates to public office.
- *Candidate* means an individual who has announced his/her intent to campaign for an elective public office, whether at the federal, state, or local level.
- *Political Activities* mean actions that endorse or oppose a candidate, a political party, or a political action committee (PAC); taking a position on an issue for the purpose of assisting or opposing a candidate or political party in a campaign; or otherwise supporting a candidate, political party, or PAC in a campaign.
- *University Resources*, for the purposes of this policy, means university funds and purchasing mechanisms, university offices, conference rooms, and other spaces and facilities; university copiers, facsimile machines, computers, and other electronic equipment; university computer networks, websites, social media accounts, e-mail accounts, listservs, and mailing lists; university telephones, and voicemail and mail systems; and university letterhead, stationery, and other supplies.

### **Political Activity Guidelines**

Faculty and staff (including student employees) may not engage in political activities during work hours.

If a proposed activity is not discussed in these guidelines, or if there is uncertainty about the permissibility of a proposed activity, contact the Office of Public Affairs in advance of engaging that activity in order to obtain appropriate guidance.

## **Marauders on Politics**

Marauders on Politics (MOP) is a student organization with official recognition of the university. It is a non-partisan organization for students interested in politics at the national, state, and local levels. The membership includes students with different political beliefs who work together to provide information to the student body about how and where to vote. MOP also provides opportunities for students to meet candidates; they sponsor debates; and they hold discussions about political issues. MOP members who identify with a particular political party are encouraged to become involved with local party politics. In election years, MOP also sponsors debate and election return watching events. The program chair of Politics serves as the MOP advisor.

## **Candidate Appearances**

Appearance of a candidate on campus must be for an educational or informational discussion, forum or talk to the university community, or for a political debate. The executive vice president must approve such appearances.

The event may not be conducted as a campaign rally or intended to assist a particular candidate, and the moderator must make it clear that the university does not support or oppose any candidate.

## **Candidate Campaigning, Endorsement, and Fundraising**

Except where otherwise noted, the following prohibitions apply to all university entities supported in whole or part by university funds, including registered student organizations.

Candidate campaigning (solicitation) on university property is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, posting or distribution of posters, fliers, or leaflets, or transmission of materials over the Internet. No school, department, or university organization may post hyperlinks to a candidate's website or campaign websites on a university website.

No candidate may be endorsed by the university, or by a school, department, or university organization.

Funds or other contributions to support a candidate, campaign, political party or PAC may not be solicited or made in the university's name, on university property, or using university resources. All such contributions by faculty, staff, or students may be made only in an individual capacity.

Campaign paraphernalia may not be sold, distributed, or made available by schools, departments, or university organization. *Marauders on Politics* may, however, display and distribute campaign materials as part of a non-partisan voter education program for students.

## **Event Communications and Postings**

Student organizations, officially-constituted campus groups, or other organizations of the university that are sponsoring an approved discussion, forum, talk or political debate, or an approved voter education or registration activity may use campus communication mechanisms to announce that event. All such communications and postings must comply with the university's [Acceptable Use Policy](#) and [Posting Policy](#).

## **Presentations and Political Speech**

Faculty, staff, and students are free to express their individual and collective political views, provided they understand and make clear that they are not speaking for or in the name of the University of Mary.

## **Student Organizations**

It is desirable to have student organizations remain engaged and active in the political process. However, no student organization is equipped to speak on behalf of the University of Mary. Neither does *Marauders on Politics* exist to support one candidate over another, nor will the university give recognition to a student organization that has as a goal to support a particular political party or candidate.

Whenever a student organization hosts, sponsors, or publicizes an event on behalf of a political campaign or a political party, the sponsoring student organization must deliver a disclaimer explaining that the use of university facilities or resources for this event does not constitute an endorsement by the university, the views of those invited to speak on campus are the views of the speaker and not of the university, and that the university does not endorse or oppose any candidate or organization in connection with this or any other political campaign or election.

## **Use of University Funds and Resources**

University resources may not be used for political activities, either by university organizations or by outside organizations. Use of university buildings and facilities is permissible for the limited purposes set forth above and subject to the university's scheduling policy.

## **Use of University Name, Seal and Insignia**

The university's name, seal, and insignia, or those of a university school, department, or university organization may not be used on any documents to endorse or oppose any candidate for elective public office. This prohibition applies to any university entities supported in whole or part by university funds, such as registered student organizations.

## **Voter Education**

Voter education activities are permissible so long as such activities are focused on increasing public understanding of the electoral process or encouraging participation in that process. Such activities must be conducted in a non-partisan manner and may not focus on a particular candidate or party.

## **Approved**

President's Council (August 19, 2019)

Board of Trustees Executive Committee (August 22, 2019)