

<b>Policy:</b> Political Activity Policy	<b>Policy Number:</b> I-6.2
<b>Policy Owner(s):</b> Human Resources	<b>Original Date:</b> November 21, 2019
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- I. **POLICY:** John Carroll University (“the University”) provides an academic environment that encourages civic discourse in order to enrich and invigorate the educational experience for all members of the campus community. The University is committed to the free expression of political views by members of the campus community and to the value of discourse and debate as a critical part of the higher education experience, within the limitations established by law for tax-exempt organizations.
  
- II. **PURPOSE:** As a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code (link: <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/exemption-requirements-501c3-organizations>), the University also must comply with laws and rules governing these organizations. The University neither devotes resources nor urges others to conduct political or lobbying activities on its behalf that would violate guidelines established by the Internal Revenue Service, Department of Education or other state or federal governmental entities. These rules include:
  - A. Tax exempt organizations are prohibited from participating in a political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate.
  
  - B. Voter education activities that do not show a preference for a particular candidate are generally permissible.
  
- III. **SCOPE:** All employees of John Carroll University
  
- IV. **PROCEDURES:**
  - A. **University Employees During Working Hours or On University Property.** University employees may NOT perform tasks to support a particular candidate or political party on University property or during working hours, unless performed during permissible and available non-work, vacation or leave time taken in accordance with University policies. Supervisors are required to approve any political activity permissible under this policy.

B. **Political Activities** Whether an activity is permissible depends on the specific facts involved. All political events sponsored on campus must be coordinated by the University's Integrated Marketing and Communications (IMC) department. Below are general guidelines for typical forms of political activities.

C. **Public Forums or Debates**

Public forums and debates are permissible provided that the format does NOT favor a particular candidate (e.g., through questioning or the order of presentation). Tax-exempt organizations are permitted to sponsor political forums or debates provided they are sufficiently non-partisan in nature and are conducted for the purpose of educating voters. When University facilities are used to hold such an event, the following guidelines apply:

1. All prospective candidates representing all political parties must be invited to the forum or debate with reasonable advance notice, so that all candidates are given a meaningful opportunity to attend.
2. The agenda for the forum or debate should address issues of significant interest to members of the University community.
3. A non-partisan individual should serve as moderator and ensure that all ground rules are followed.
4. The University has the discretion to determine the number and viability of prospective candidates who will be invited to participate in the forum.
5. Participants should be allotted equal time in which to present their views and ideas.

D. **Candidates Appearing on Campus**

1. Candidates may be invited to speak on campus provided that an equal opportunity is given to ALL candidates seeking the same office.
2. There may be different events for different candidates, but the events must be comparable in terms of expected attendance. The University cannot indicate support or opposition for a particular candidate.
3. Political fundraising is impermissible during candidate appearances or on campus.
4. All pre-event publicity must include a statement that the views of those invited to speak on campus are the views of the speaker and NOT the views of the University; that use of the University's facilities for this event does not constitute an endorsement by the University; and that the University does not endorse this candidate or any other candidate in connection with this or any other political campaign or election. Language similar to this should be read aloud at the start and conclusion of the event: *"The views expressed here today are those solely of the speaker and not of*

*John Carroll University. The use of John Carroll's facilities does not constitute an endorsement of any political candidate or of the views expressed. No fundraising is permitted at this event."*

5. A candidate also may be invited to speak in a non-candidate capacity, if, for example, the candidate holds a public office or is a celebrity. Any appearance by a candidate for political office or public official must be solely for the purposes of giving an educational or informational talk in an area of expertise or on a topic in which they have substantial experience (e.g. a career politician could give a talk on polling data and campaign strategy). The candidates should not make mention of their candidacy, and the University must maintain a non-partisan atmosphere at the event.
6. While the University recognizes that political events can be emotionally charged and divisive, events involving candidates must comport to the standards of appropriate behavior that the University community members are held to under applicable University policies.

**E. Voter Registration Activities**

Voter registration activities (i.e. having voter registration forms available and/or soliciting or encouraging people to fill out voter registration forms) are permissible provided that no reference to a candidate or political party is made by the volunteers staffing the booth or in the materials available at the booth, except for official voter registration forms.

**F. Get Out to Vote Activities**

It is permissible to contact people to encourage them to vote. It is NOT permissible to undertake the activity in a way that favors one candidate, such as by advocating voting only to people who are in favor of one candidate, or by offering transportation to the polls only to people in favor of one candidate.

**G. Issue Advocacy**

Activities related to issues, rather than to specific candidates, generally are permissible. The context must be reviewed to determine if support for the issue implies a suggestion to vote for a particular candidate, e.g., if the issue is a prominent issue that distinguishes the candidates.

**H. Activities by University Officers and Vice Presidents**

1. The University is committed to respecting personal and academic freedom. However, because of the University's status as a tax-exempt organization, those in a leadership position at the University cannot endorse a candidate or make partisan comments in official University publications or official University meetings or functions.

2. A person in a leadership position is permitted to endorse a candidate in an advertisement, or non-University forum provided that the endorsement is clearly made in the leader's PERSONAL capacity and NOT on behalf of the University, the ad is paid for by the campaign, the ad does not appear in an official publication of the University, and the ad or endorsement states that titles (if given) are provided for identification only.

**I. Use of University Facilities and Resources**

1. The University may use discretion in determining whether to enter into a Facilities Use Agreement for an event sponsored by a candidate or candidates in a particular election. Facilities may be made available to candidates ONLY if they are made available to all candidates in the same election on an equal basis. Normal University fees will be charged.
2. It is not permissible to use the University's e-mail or IT systems, copiers or mailing lists to reproduce or disseminate campaign-related information or literature.
3. Signs of support for a candidate (i.e. posters, apparel etc.) that could be viewed as the University's endorsement of a candidate are not permissible in public-facing locations on University property or during University working hours.
4. University websites may NOT be used to support a particular candidate. Web links from University websites may be made ONLY to nonpartisan voter education sites. Web links may NOT be made to sites that favor one particular candidate.
5. University letterhead and logo CANNOT be used on any document (hard copy or electronic) intended to support a particular candidate or political party.

**J. University Tax Exemption**

University's tax exempt identification or status cannot be used to purchase goods or services to be used to support a particular candidate or political party.

**K. Student Activities**

All political events sponsored by student organizations must be coordinated by the Office of Student Engagement and the University's Integrated Marketing and Communications department. (For further information on student activities, see "Student Organization Political and Campaign Activities Policy" ([www.jcu.edu/sites/default/files/2024-10/JCU%20Student%20Political%20and%20Campaign%20Activities%20Policy%20.pdf](http://www.jcu.edu/sites/default/files/2024-10/JCU%20Student%20Political%20and%20Campaign%20Activities%20Policy%20.pdf)).

**L. Lobbying**

1. Lobbying Congress or federal officials to influence policy on behalf of the University is generally permissible under applicable laws.

2. Pursuant to University practice, lobbying activities on behalf of the University may only be made by authorized University officers or their designees, or the University's Integrated Marketing and Communications department.
3. These individuals are required by law to report their lobbying activities to the University's Integrated Marketing and Communications department so they can be recorded and reported. The University follows similar guidelines in recording and reporting State of Ohio government lobbying activities.

**M. Polling Site Activities**

The University may enter into an arrangement for its facilities to be utilized as an official polling site for an authorized political election. This policy does not apply to permissible political activity or signs lawfully placed by authorized candidates or organizations on University property on election day, if permissible under federal, state, and local election laws.

**CROSS REFERENCE:**

[Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

[P-Card](#)