

Office of the Vice President of Public Affairs and Government Relations

Guidelines for Political Campaign Invitations, Events, and Activities

I. Introduction:

Indiana University encourages students, staff, and faculty members to exercise their constitutional right to vote and to actively participate and express their opinions regarding local, state, and national political candidates, issues, and referendums. However, as a public institution, Indiana University receives tax exempt status under sections 115 and 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. In order to maintain this status, the University shall not participate or intervene in any political campaign and must prevent its resources from being used in any way that could appear to support a political candidate.

Examples of the University's resources include but are not limited to:

- The University's name, logo, or other identifying mark;
 - Note: For more information, please refer to <http://iu.licensing.indiana.edu/trademarkpolicy.pdf>
- The University's funds, facilities, office supplies, photo equipment, letterhead, telephones, fax machines, computers, etc.;
- The University's information technology resources such as email, websites and on-line discussion boards.
 - Note: For more information, please refer to <http://informationpolicy.iu.edu/policies/IT01> and to the examples provided in Section III below.

The university, in accordance with the provisions of section II B of these guidelines, may host sponsored events and invite political candidates in either their campaign or individual capacities.

II. Examples of Permitted Activities:

A. Voter Education: Section 501(c)(3) organizations are permitted to conduct certain voter education activities as long as they are carried out in a non-partisan manner.

1. Conducting public forums, get-out-the-vote drives, and the publication of voter education guides that covers a wide range of issues are examples that are allowed

as long as the activities are NOT conducted in a biased manner that favors or opposes a single candidate or issue.

2. Circulating unbiased questionnaires to all candidates running for a public office and then reporting the results is acceptable assuming that the questions are fair and neutral, cover a broad array of topics, and each candidate is afforded a reasonable amount of time to respond to the questionnaire. Any “yes or no” questions should include space for a candidate to explain their response.

B. Candidate Appearances:

1. University Sponsored Invitations and Events:

- i. Political candidates can be invited to speak at events in their capacity as a political candidate or in their individual capacity. If a candidate is being invited in a campaign capacity by the University, the University must provide all legally-qualified candidates or their representatives an opportunity to appear either at the same event or at a comparable event within a reasonable time period. If a candidate declines, the University should retain documentation that the invitation was issued and declined. The introduction of a candidate or their representative should be neutral and include a brief statement that the University does not endorse or oppose any candidate or organization in connection with this or any other political campaign or election. Appropriate steps must be taken to avoid the appearance of the University’s endorsement of or opposition to any candidate. No fundraising is allowed.
- ii. When a candidate is invited in an individual (non-candidate) capacity, there is no need to provide a comparable opportunity to the other candidates, the introduction of the candidate should not mention their candidacy, absolutely no fundraising or campaign literature is allowed, and a nonpartisan atmosphere should be maintained.

2. Student Organization Sponsored Invitations and Events:

- i. “Student organization” refers to a student group that is recognized in accordance with any specific campus policies or practices.
- ii. A student organization hosting an event may extend invitations to candidates to come and speak. A student organization is not obligated to

invite all legally-qualified candidates if the student organization is using its own funds and resources. However, no campaign fundraising may occur and the student organization must include a brief statement when introducing the candidate that the University does not endorse or oppose any candidate or organization in connection with this or any other political campaign or election.

- iii. The nature of the event will determine the facility rental charge that a student organization will be assessed. If it is a campus community event and is not open to the general public, then the normal fees, if any, assessed to a student organization for facility rental and usage fees can be applied. However, if the event is open to the general public, facility rental and usage fees must be charged.
- iv. Appropriate steps should be taken by student organizations to avoid the appearance of the University's endorsement of or opposition to any candidate.

3. *External Group Sponsored Invitations and Events:*

- i. Candidates, campaign organizations, and other external groups may request space on the campus to host political events which may be either limited audience or general public events.
- ii. Normal charges assessed to outside groups renting space shall apply with no discounts, preferential scheduling or other gratuities (security, sound systems, parking, etc.) extended to the sponsoring individual or organization.
- iii. If facilities are made available to one candidate or political party, the same must be made available to all others on equal terms and conditions, which include any limitations on availability of particular facilities, due to the scheduling of other events, at the time a candidate or party makes a request.
- iv. University or campus officials should not appear on the podium to introduce or in any other way convey the perception of support or endorsement.

- v. Appropriate steps must be taken to avoid the appearance of the University's endorsement of or opposition to any candidate.

III. Examples of Prohibited Activities:

A. The University shall not expressly or impliedly endorse any candidate for public office. In this regard, it is extremely important that (a) faculty and staff limit any use of University email or other communications facilities for personal discussion of a candidate, to a minimum consistent with the concept of "incidental personal use," and (b) any communications by faculty or staff regarding a candidate be clearly identified as the faculty/staff member's personal views and not those of the institution. An occasional email to a friend or a few colleagues reacting to a news item about a candidate or campaign is permissible, but sending email messages via University email to groups of others outside a small circle of family and friends, in order to promote, assist, or oppose a candidate, is prohibited.

For example: an email sent via a University email account to a number of colleagues asking that they provide food for campaign workers as they conduct local campaign activities for a candidate, is not permitted. Likewise, an email sent via a University email account to a number of colleagues seeking endorsement of a policy position or document to be used by a candidate, is not permitted.

B. Hyperlinks to the websites of candidates for public office shall not be placed on the University's website in any manner that favors one candidate over another.

C. No political fundraising may occur on university property or through the use of the University's technology resources, including but not limited to University email accounts. University email accounts may not be used by faculty, staff or students (including recognized student groups) to urge financial support of a particular candidate or to invite others to political fundraisers, whether hosted/sponsored by the candidate or by others in support of the candidate. Additionally, University email may not be used to forward or otherwise distribute messages, invitations, solicitations, or campaign literature from or on behalf of a candidate.

For example: an officer or member of a student group may not email a group of persons using a University email account, to advertise a fundraiser at a local restaurant for a candidate.

- D. Student organizations shall not use the name of the University or any trademark of the University, such as a logo, in connection with political candidates or partisan political activities.

Additional information about the policies and regulations related to logos and licensing can be found at:

<http://iu.licensing.indiana.edu/trademarkpolicy.pdf>

- E. Student organizations shall not use University funds on behalf of a candidate for public office in a political campaign or to influence the public legislature.
- F. The foregoing is not exhaustive. Maintaining its 501(c)(3) tax status is of the utmost importance to the University and sensible judgment and due diligence should be exercised in arranging any event or activity that involves political activity.

IV. Additional Information:

- A. The Office of the Vice President for Public Affairs and Government Relations and the appropriate campus vice chancellor responsible for external affairs and government relations shall be notified of all requests for political campaign invitations and events in order to help ensure proper communication within the University.
- B. These guidelines are to be read as a complement to the Academic Guide, Academic Handbook, Non-Tenure-Track Handbook, Tenure & Promotion Handbook, Handbook for Student Academic Appointees, all policy memoranda, and the policies listed at <http://gov.indiana.edu/policies/index.shtml>.
- C. These guidelines do not address contacts with elected officials by faculty, staff and students. For more information regarding elected officials and staff, please see the policies found in the Academic Handbook or <http://www.gov.indiana.edu/policies/contacts.shtml>.
- D. If you have additional questions after reviewing these resources and the additional resources that each campus may have, please contact Judith Palmer in the Office of the Vice President for Public Affairs and Government Relations.