



**SAINT LOUIS  
UNIVERSITY™**

Student Involvement Center  
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## **Political Activities**

As a condition of Saint Louis University's tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, *it is prohibited from directly or indirectly participating or intervening in political campaign activities on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for elected public office.* This prohibition is absolute and any violation, regardless of its scope, may result in the loss of the University's tax-exempt status. Accordingly, the University may not endorse candidates, provide or solicit financial or other means of support for candidates and political organizations, or permit its facilities, services, personnel and other resources to be used to support or oppose a candidate's campaign.

Saint Louis University wishes to maintain a campus environment that is conducive to the free and open discussion of ideas and opinions, and it encourages students, faculty and staff, in their individual capacities, to exercise their civic rights to participate in the electoral process, including involvement in political campaigns, so long as they make clear that their political activities and statements are their own and not the University's.

The Internal Revenue Service on a case-by-case basis, following a review of all facts and circumstances surrounding each case, makes the determination of whether or not an organization has intervened in a political campaign. The Internal Revenue Service has no bright line rules and provides limited guidance to assist organizations in determining whether or not a particular activity may constitute a prohibited political campaign intervention. Therefore, the University must carefully consider whether to permit on-campus political activities and events on a case-by-case basis. The following requirements and guidelines have been established for recognized student organizations who wish to invite

candidates to appear on campus, hold candidate forums, or conduct activities designed to educate voters and encourage their participation in the electoral process.

### **Political Activities On-Campus**

The University, under appropriate circumstances and subject to certain conditions, may make its facilities available to recognized student organizations for non-partisan political activities designed to educate voters and encourage participation in the electoral process (such as candidate forums and debates, voter registration drives, and get out the vote efforts) so long as they in no way reflect or incorporate a political bias or opinion in their format and presentation, and are open to all members of the University community regardless of political affiliation.

Before inviting a candidate to speak on-campus or undertaking any voter education or registration activities, recognized student organizations must contact the Student Involvement Center to ensure that the University is able to accommodate a planned event or activity and maintain its compliance with the prohibition on political campaign interventions. Recognized student organizations seeking to use University facilities must follow all University policies and procedures governing the reservation and use of University facilities.

The University reserves the right to impose any conditions, restrictions or limitations upon the use of its facilities that the University, in its sole discretion, deems appropriate to ensure its compliance with federal tax laws and regulations.

### **Candidate Appearances**

Recognized student organizations may invite candidates to speak on campus for the purpose of educating the University community. Candidate appearances must consist of a speech and question-and-answer session or similar communications in an academic setting and may in no way reflect or incorporate a political bias or opinion in their format

and presentation. The agenda for a candidate appearance should address a wide range of issues and be of significant interest to the members of the University community.

If a candidate is invited to appear on campus, all other legally qualified candidates must be extended the same opportunity. All candidates must be provided the same opportunities to present their views and ideas with respect to the time allotted and at a date and time which will allow access to an audience that is equal in number and make up.

Admission to candidate appearances, their format and presentation may in no way be controlled by a candidate, campaign personnel, political party, partisan organization or any other individual or organization from outside of the University. Candidate appearances may not be held in coordination with any campaign related event or activity and shall not be used to solicit or collect campaign contributions or other political commitments.

Promotional materials for candidate appearances may not state or imply the University endorses candidate or political organization and takes no political position with regard to any candidate or organization.

### **Voter Registration**

The University may provide space to recognized student organizations to conduct voter registration activities, so long as these activities in no way reflect or incorporate a political bias or opinion and it is made clear the organization is not acting on behalf of the University. Voter registration on-campus is necessarily restricted to reserved tables and authorized spaces in accordance with the University's fundraising policy.

Voter registration activities must be held separate and apart from any political campaign related event or activity, and shall not be used to solicit or collect campaign or other political contributions or commitments. Voter registration activities may in no way be controlled by a candidate, campaign personnel, political party or partisan organization.

The use of the University's names and marks in conjunction with the promotion or conduct of voter registration activities is prohibited. However, the name Saint Louis University and the names of campus locations and may be used to identify the place where the activity is to occur.