

Political Activities

GR-02



About This Policy

Effective Date:

06-15-2016

Last Updated:

06-15-2016

Responsible University Office:

Office of Government Relations

Responsible University Administrator:

Vice President for Government Relations

Policy Contact:

Becca Polcz

Director for Government Relations

rpolcz@iu.edu

Related Information

- * [GR-01 Contact with Federal and State Government Officials](#)
- * [FIN-LT-01 Licensing and Trademark Policy](#)
- * [IT-01 Appropriate Use of Information Technology Resources](#)
- * [ACA-29 Conflicts of Commitment Involving Outside Professional Activities for Academic Appointees](#)
- * [ACA-34 Political Activities of Academic Personnel](#)

Scope

Policy Statement

Reason For Policy

Procedure

Definitions

Sanctions

History

[Back to top](#) ↗

Scope

This Policy applies to the following Indiana University Community Members ("IU Community Members"):

- Any employee of the University, including administrators, faculty, staff, temporary, and student employees;
- All students and student organizations;
- All University units;
- Any individual using Indiana University resources or facilities or receiving funds administered by Indiana University; and
- Volunteers and other representatives when speaking or acting on behalf of Indiana University.

[Definition based on the [Principles of Ethical Conduct](#)]

Policy Statement

The University recognizes the right of IU Community Members to engage in political activities beyond those normally entailed in voting and participating in routine community, state, and national programs, provided that, in the case of University employees, the participation does not prevent the full discharge of the employee's staff or academic responsibilities.

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. University trademarks may not be used by candidates for elected office or by IU Community Members in a way that would create the appearance of Indiana University support for a particular candidate or political party.

Principles and Procedures to Be Observed

Direct Participation in Political Activity by Individual IU Community Members

IU Community Members shall be free to participate in political activities on the national, state, or local level such as running for political office, managing political campaigns, and assuming leadership roles in political organizations, providing that the participation does not prevent full discharge of their obligations to the University. If such participation does prevent full discharge, the individual will be required to request a leave of absence for the period of the activity.

In any such activities, it must be made clear that the individual is acting as a private citizen and is in no way representing the University.

The academic appointee who proposes to engage in political activities shall be required to inform his or her departmental chairperson, the school dean, and the Vice Chancellor/Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs or equivalent.

Should a disagreement arise between the faculty member and any of the above administrative officers regarding the faculty member's ability to discharge academically related obligations, the faculty member shall be entitled to appeal to the Faculty Board of Review, which shall make the final decision. Other academic appointees have other means of appeal.

[Based on [ACA-34](#)]

All other, non-academic employees who propose to engage in political activities shall be required to comply with the [IU Human Resources Policy on Political Activity](#) and shall inform the Office of the Vice President for Government Relations, which will consult with the employee's unit.

Activities that Indiana University and IU Community Members May Undertake

1. 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. For example, conducting public forums, get-out-the-vote drives, and the publication of voter education guides that cover a wide range of issues are allowed as long as the activities are NOT conducted in a biased manner that favors or opposes a single candidate or issue.

2. Candidate Appearances

A. Invitations and Events: University Sponsored

1. Political candidates may be invited to speak at events, including classroom visits and debates. These events are to be educational in nature and offered for that purpose in conjunction with the University's public education mission.
2. If one candidate is invited to speak at an event, 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. Evidence of invitations and responses must be kept on file. If an invited candidate fails to respond after multiple invitations to the event, such should be noted in the file along with the invitations issued. [An exception may be made for an elected official who is simultaneously a candidate for office, so long as the remarks are limited to official business related to the duties of the elected office.]

3. The University may not co-sponsor a campaign event with an External Entity. The term “External Entity” refers to a candidate, campaign or political organization, not-for profit, and any other outside group.
4. The introduction of a candidate or the candidate’s representative at a University-sponsored event must 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. In cases where the individual candidates will appear in a conversational dialogue about issues, each candidate will have the same format of question or topic presentation; same topics in both substance and number; same amount of time for discussion; same moderator for the event; and same physical setting or staging. Appropriate steps must be taken to avoid the appearance of the University’s endorsement of or opposition to any candidate.
5. All expenses related to an event conducted pursuant to this section shall be borne by the sponsoring University unit(s); External Entities may not co-sponsor events along with University units.
6. Political fundraising at University-sponsored events is prohibited.

B. Invitations and Events: Student Organization Sponsored

1. “Student organization” refers to any IU student group that is recognized in accordance with any University and/or campus-specific policies or practices.
2. A student organization may conduct a single-candidate or single-party event pursuant to this section; however, if any funding used to pay for the event originated from Indiana University, the student organization must invite all legally-qualified candidates to participate in the event.
3. A student organization may hold a meeting or event that is closed to the general public and limited to student organization members.
4. A student organization sponsored event will be subject to the normal fees assessed to a student organization for facility rental and usage fees, if any.
5. If the event is open to the general public, the student organization must have a University Sponsor (see Definitions below) for the event. Facility rental and usage fees must be charged. Invitations to any event that is open to the general public must be extended to all legally-qualified candidates, and the student organization must include a brief statement when introducing the candidate or the candidate’s representative that the University does not endorse or oppose any candidate or organization in connection with this or any other political campaign or election.
6. Political fundraising at student organization sponsored events, whether open or closed to the public, is prohibited.
7. Appropriate steps must be taken by student organizations to avoid the appearance of the University’s endorsement of or opposition to any candidate.


C. Invitations and Events: Sponsored by External Entities

1. External Entities may rent space on University Property to host political events, which may be either limited audience or general public events.
2. An event sponsored by an External Entity shall be subject to normal charges assessed to External Entities renting space with no discounts, preferential scheduling or other gratuities, or free or reduced rates for related services (such as security, sound systems, parking, broadcasting or web services, etc.).
3. No exceptions to facility rental practices shall be made for a candidate or political party. Candidates or parties may rent only those University facilities that are regularly available for rent.
4. If facilities are rented to one candidate or political party, the same or similar facilities must be made available for rent to all others on equal terms and conditions, subject to any limitations on availability of particular facilities, due to the scheduling of other events, at the time a candidate or party makes a request.
5. External Entities that conduct events pursuant to this section shall take appropriate steps to avoid the appearance of the University’s endorsement of or opposition to any candidate.
6. Political fundraising at events sponsored by External Entities is prohibited.

Prohibited Activities for Indiana University and IU Community Members

Maintaining the University's 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. The following is a non-exhaustive list of activities that must be avoided in order to protect the University's 501(c)(3) status:

1. The University shall not expressly or impliedly endorse any candidate for public office. In this regard, it is extremely important that IU Community Members refrain from using University email or other communication tools for personal discussion of or advocacy on behalf of a candidate, and such communications must be clearly identified as the individual IU Community Member's personal views and not those of the University.
2. Hyperlinks to the websites of candidates for public office shall not be placed on any University website in any manner that favors one candidate over another.
3. Political fundraising on University Property or through the use of the University's technology resources, including but not limited to University email accounts, is prohibited. Individual University email accounts, campus mail, and University social media accounts may not be used by individual IU Community Members 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.
4. IU Community Members may not use University email, campus mail, and University social media accounts to forward or otherwise distribute messages, invitations, solicitations, or campaign literature from or on behalf of a candidate or political party.
5. The name of the University, any trademark, logo, and/or image depicting landmarks of the University, must not be used in connection with political candidates or partisan political activities. Student organizations are permitted by Indiana University's Student Organization Policy (STU-01) to use the approved University student organization marks for their campus; however, student organizations may not alter their official logo to incorporate candidate information.
6. Student organizations shall not use any funding that originated from Indiana University on behalf of a candidate for public office or in a political campaign.

[Back to top](#) 

Reason For Policy

This policy has been established to provide guidelines and procedures pertaining to participation in campaign and other political activities by IU Community Members. This policy is designed to ensure compliance with legal requirements of the Internal Revenue Code, which allows Indiana University to maintain tax exempt status, but requires the University not to participate or intervene in any political campaign, and to prevent University resources from being used in any way that could appear to support a political candidate.


This policy is not intended to limit the personal rights of IU Community Members to contact and advocate with federal, state, or local officials for their personal beliefs and issues or to donate to political campaigns or causes as an individual. Similarly, this policy is not directed toward those contacts made on behalf of their professional societies, as long as that representation is not in the name of Indiana University.

Indiana University encourages students, staff, and faculty members to exercise their constitutional right to vote, to actively participate, and express their opinions regarding local, state, and national political candidates, issues, and referendums.

[Back to top](#) 

Procedure

The Office of the Vice President for Government Relations and the appropriate campus vice chancellor responsible for external affairs shall be notified by IU Community Members of all requests for political campaign invitations and events in order to ensure proper communication within the University.

[Back to top](#) 

Definitions

University Resources: Include but are not limited to the University's name, logo, or other identifying mark; the University's funds, facilities, office supplies, photo equipment, letterhead, telephones, fax machines, and computers; and the University's information technology resources such as email, websites, and on-line discussion boards.

University Property: Buildings, grounds, and land that are owned by Indiana University or controlled by Indiana University via leases or other formal contractual arrangements to house ongoing IU operations.

Indiana University Community Members: Any employee of the University, including administrators, faculty, staff, temporary, and student employees; all students and student organizations; all University units; any individual using Indiana University resources or facilities or receiving funds administered by Indiana University; and volunteers and other representatives when speaking or acting on behalf of Indiana University.

Student Organization: A student group that is recognized in accordance with any University and/or campus-specific policies or practices.

University Sponsor: A University campus, school, department, or unit.

External Entity(ies): Candidates, campaign or political organizations, not-for profits, and all other outside groups.

[Back to top ↗](#)

Sanctions

Violations of University policies, including the failure to refrain from engaging in a prohibited activity or failure to obtain required approvals, will be addressed in accordance with applicable University policies and procedures.

[Back to top ↗](#)

History

This policy was established in 2016 to combine existing guidelines from the IU Office of Government Relations as well as ACA-34 Political Activities of Academic Personnel; and the HR Political Activity policy.