



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES ON CAMPUS

I. Introduction

Norfolk State University ("NSU") supports the rights of a free citizenship to participate in the democratic process afforded every American. As a state university, however, it is necessary to avoid displaying partisanship in any manner. The NSU Board of Visitors, University, Faculty and Administrative policies regarding political activity on campus are guided by state and federal law.

II. Current Policies:

A. Commonwealth of Virginia:

The Department of Human Resource Management's Employee Handbook, "Miscellaneous Topics" Section, Subsection G. "Political Activity" states as follows:

State employees may not campaign for themselves or for anyone else during work hours, nor can they use state equipment or resources for political activities. Further, no employee is to be rewarded or discriminated against in any way for participating or not participating in political activities outside of the workday and work place. Before beginning any political activity, you should determine whether such activity violates the Virginia Conflict of Interests Act.

The political activities of employees in state agencies that are funded in whole or in part by federal loans or grants are subject to the conditions of the Hatch Act, a federal law limiting political activities of government employees (<http://www.osc.gov/hatchact.htm>). If you are in a position that receives any federal funds, you may not:

1. stand as a candidate for any public or political party elective office in a partisan election (one in which any candidate runs as representative of a political party whose presidential candidate received electoral votes in the preceding presidential election);
2. directly or indirectly coerce, attempt to coerce, command, or advise a state or local officer or employee to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value for political purposes; or
3. use official authority or influence to interfere with, or to influence, the results of an election or nomination for office.

B. Norfolk State University Board of Visitors:

The NSU Board of Visitors approved on July 19, 2001 the following "Guideline Requests for Political Activities Policy" statement:

'University facilities shall not be used to promote a political cause unless the cause is sponsored by a bona fide university student organization.' The President shall have the authority over the issue of what activities take place on campus. University employees and Board members may attend such events as impartial, non-influential participants.

C. Norfolk State University Teaching Faculty Handbook

Sections 9.9 of the 2007 NSU Teaching Faculty Handbook addresses "Political Activities" as follows:

9.9 POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Faculty members who are considering running for political office must consult with the Vice President for Academic Affairs [Provost] about possible conflicts of interest and University policy pertaining thereto. This also applies to faculty elected to political office.

The University encourages public service. However, some activities may have time requirements that adversely affect the faculty member's ability to perform assigned duties and responsibilities. In such instances, the University retains the right to determine whether an activity requires some form of leave of absence.

9.9.1 On-Campus

The University shall maintain a non-partisan posture with regard to political parties and/or candidates. The Vice President for Academic Affairs [Provost] shall be notified of all plans for political activities or speakers. Because of the special faculty-student relationship, the faculty member should be especially careful to avoid any activity within the University community that might be interpreted as coercive.

9.9.2 Off-Campus

The University supports the right of faculty to participate in political activity in the community, provided that such activity does not interfere with the faculty member's University responsibilities. The faculty member must exercise careful judgment regarding the injection of his or her own political interests or activities into the University community and should avoid presenting personal views in the name of the University.

D. Norfolk State University Administrative & Professional Faculty Handbook

The "Political Activities" Section of the NSU A & P Faculty Handbook states as follows:

Administrative and professional faculty who are considering running for political office must consult with their Vice President about possible conflicts of interest and University policy pertaining thereto. This also applies to staff elected to political office.

The University encourages public service. However, some activities may have time requirements that adversely affect the staff member's ability to perform assigned duties and responsibilities. In such instances, the University retains the right to determine whether an activity requires some form of leave of absence.

On-Campus

In July 2001, the Board of Visitors approved a policy statement directing that all use of university property or facilities for political activity must be sponsor[ed] by an official student organization.

The University shall maintain a non-partisan posture with regard to political parties and/or candidates. The President shall be notified of all plans for political activities or speakers. Because of the special faculty-student relationship, the administrative staff person should be especially careful to avoid any activity within the University community that might be interpreted as coercive.

Off-Campus

The University supports the right of administrative and professional faculty to participate in political activity in the community, provided that such activity does not interfere with the staff member's University responsibilities. Each administrative and professional faculty member must exercise careful judgment regarding the injection of his/her own political interests or activities into the University community and must avoid presenting personal views in the name of the University.

III. Procedures for the Engagement in Political Activities:

A. Voter Registration and/or Education

- All activities must be sponsored by an officially recognized NSU student organization, or by the President of the University who shall have authority to determine what activities shall take place on campus.
- Registered student organizations desirous of using campus facilities for activities are required to complete a General Activity Requisition Form (GARF). This form is used to verify the availability of facilities and equipment. The GARF should be submitted ten (10) working days prior to the activity date to allow processing by the student organization(s) advisor and university department officials for approval. Persons using facilities must have an approved copy of the GARF present throughout the activity and shall show it, upon request, to university officials. The organization's advisor(s) must be present throughout all activities.
- For GARF forms, contact Student Activities at (757) 823-8200, or download the form from the NSU website at <http://www.nsu.edu/ems/forms/>.
- Any organization desiring to hold voter registration and/or voter education events on campus, should contact the Political Science Department Chair at (757) 823-8999.
- There is no charge for the space used to hold non-partisan voter registration and/or voter education events.

B. Political Activities on Campus

All political activities must be sponsored by an officially recognized NSU student organization. Examples of political activity include, but are not limited to, campaigning, political speakers, distribution of political literature and materials, and political rallies.

- Campaigning at Sporting Events

- Inside sports facilities – Distribution of political materials of any kind is prohibited inside any campus sports facility or arena.
- Outside sports facilities – Distribution of political materials and campaigning outside of campus sports facilities shall be relegated to the designated tailgating area on a first come and available basis.

- ◆ No merchandise of any kind may be sold outside of any campus sports facility.
- ◆ Signs and banners of a political nature may be displayed in the rented tailgating spaces.
- ◆ Facilities Management cleans the tailgate area immediately following sporting events. All signs and banners must be removed immediately at the end of the event or they will be discarded as trash by Facilities Management.
- ◆ To rent tailgate space, contact Nat Warren at (757) 328-4271.

C. Other Campus Sites for Campaign Signs

- Contact Nat Warren at (757) 328-4271 to place campaign signs endorsing candidates in the designated free area(s).
- All signs must be approximately 24 ins. by 24 ins. and have the approximate height with stand not to exceed 4 ft.
- Only campaign/political signs endorsing individual candidates for public office are permitted. Signs advocating issues, political parties, groups, or any other subject, political or otherwise, are not permitted. Signs which do not comply with this standard will be removed and discarded as trash.
- Signs must be removed immediately at the end of the event or signs will be removed as trash.
- Only one (1) sign per candidate/organization is permitted in the designated free area(s).
- There is no charge for campaign signs posted in these designated free area(s).

D. Vendors

All vendors must obtain a Vendor License Agreement from Auxiliary Services (757) 823-8085. Only approved vendors with a valid Vendor License Agreement may sell merchandise of any kind, political or otherwise, within the designated gated area. The vendors must declare what merchandise/products are to be sold at the time they obtain their permit. Vendors selling materials of a political nature will be rented space on a first come basis/first served basis. Additional details concerning city licensing requirements, rental fees and other terms, may be obtained from Auxiliary Services. The sale of any merchandise or products of any kind outside of the gated area is strictly prohibited.

IV. Disclaimer:

Norfolk State University is not responsible for the opinions or contents of any partisan political materials or presentations distributed, displayed or held on campus. Norfolk State University neither endorses nor opposes the views of any particular political party or candidate for public office. Nor does Norfolk State University condone, support or endorse any of the content, views or opinions expressed in any materials of a political nature (i.e., signs, posters, banners, leaflets, fliers, buttons, t-shirts, hand-bills, etc.) distributed on campus or expressed by individuals in speeches or other presentations held on campus.

Approved by University Counsel: October 14, 2008

Approved by Executive Cabinet: October 20, 2008