



# DES MOINES UNIVERSITY

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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Department: Des Moines University  
Subject: Political Campaign Activity  
Date Issued: May 2016  
Date Reviewed: February 2017  
Reviewed By: Angela Franklin, CEO  
Date Approved: February 14, 2017  
Approved By: Board of Trustees

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### **I. PURPOSE**

While Des Moines University respects the right of members of the campus community to actively engage in the political process and exercise free speech, state and federal laws generally prohibit the use of University facilities and resources to promote partisan political causes, campaigns and candidates (hereinafter “partisan political activity”). With political contests highly visible in Iowa, members of the DMU community, including faculty, students, staff and members of our DMU Board of Trustees must abide by this policy which bans political campaign activity by DMU. As a non-profit, tax-exempt entity organized under Section 501(c)(3) of the federal tax code, the University is prohibited by federal law from becoming directly or indirectly involved in campaigns of political candidates.

### **II. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all DMU employees, members of the Board of Trustees and students. Use of the DMU facilities and resources for partisan political activity is prohibited.

### **III. POLICY**

The University, and members of the University community in their official capacity, are prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office. The University is prohibited from making contributions to political campaigns or public statements in favor or opposition to any candidate. Such activity would be considered “partisan political activity” and could result in revocation of the University’s tax-exempt status.

#### **A. Individual Activity**

Employees, Trustees and students are encouraged to exercise their rights as individuals to participate in the political process. However, such activity must take place on their personal time and with their own resources.

Employees and Trustees, through statements or actions in their official capacity with the University, may not imply that DMU endorses or opposes a political candidate for public office. Any communications made in their private capacity cannot be presented as reflecting the position of the University.

## **B. Voter Registration and Education Activities**

The University may promote voter participation and sponsor and conduct voter registration activities as long as the activities are conducted in a nonpartisan manner and there is no advocacy for or against a particular candidate or ballot issue. Permitted activities include nonpartisan training programs designed to increase public understanding of and participation in the electoral process, including efforts to facilitate voter registration.

All voter registration activities must be approved by The Chief of External and Government Affairs.

## **C. University-Sponsored Events and Communications**

University-sponsored events and communications about elections and issues important to the mission of DMU are permitted as long as these events and communications are conducted in a nonpartisan manner. DMU will not directly or indirectly sponsor any events or make communications that show favoritism for or opposition to a candidate running for public office.

University may take positions on public policy issues, including issues that divide candidates in an election for public office. However, DMU will assure that its issue advocacy activities do not function as political campaign intervention.

1. All requests from or invitations to a candidate for public office to appear at a DMU-sponsored event or on DMU campus must be reviewed and approved by the Chief of External and Government Affairs.
  - a. DMU may provide a public forum for political candidates to speak individually in their capacity as a candidate if all such legally qualified candidates for the public office are afforded the same opportunity to appear and speak. Should DMU convene such a forum, candidates generally will not be permitted to send a surrogate to speak on their behalf.
  - b. The institution will take reasonable steps to ensure that such appearances constitute speeches, question-and-answer sessions, or similar communications and are not conducted as campaign rallies or fund-raising events.
  - c. Any related communications, including the introduction of candidates, must not include statements of support for or against a candidate. An explicit statement will be made to advise the audience that DMU does not support or oppose the candidate.
  - d. As a convener of health-related conversations and education, DMU may invite a candidate for political office to appear in a non-candidate capacity, provided that the individual is selected as a speaker solely for reasons other than his or her capacity as

a candidate. In such instances, no mention of the candidacy or upcoming election can be made and campaigning at the event is prohibited.

2. All official DMU communications, in any format including electronic postings on DMU-sponsored website or social media, relating to an election or political campaign must be approved by the Chief of External and Government Affairs.
3. Student club activities are considered to be DMU-sponsored; therefore, the foregoing standards apply to any club-related political advocacy activities.

#### **D. Use of University Facilities and Resources**

Institutional facilities and resources, including but not limited to, funds, space, administrative support, website, and other media, may not be used for partisan political activity.

1. Any use of DMU funds for political purposes must be approved by the Chief Financial Officer.
2. Any use of DMU facilities for political purposes must comply with the Room Reservation and Use policy.
3. Employees, students and Trustees are prohibited from using any DMU administrative resources, such as photocopying, staff time, or use of DMU's email system, to conduct partisan political activity.
4. Political signage endorsing candidates may not be posted on University premises
5. For information regarding guidelines regarding demonstrations please see the policy for [Peaceful Dissent and Demonstrations on Campus](#).