



August 3, 2017

To the Stevens Community,

As the fall approaches and with municipal elections on the horizon for the positions of Mayor of Hoboken and at-large City Council, as well as State elections for Governor and Lt. Governor, among others, it is important for Stevens faculty, staff and students to be acquainted with the guidelines for allowable political involvement by charitable organizations and their employees and other representatives.

Stevens is a nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) status from the IRS. Stevens' 501(c)(3) status prohibits involvement by Stevens in partisan or political activities. This means, among other things, that Stevens may not endorse a candidate, contribute to a campaign or take other actions which would provide benefits to one candidate and not another. Two useful resources are available which provide additional detail and some illustrative examples about these requirements for charitable organizations, including a [memorandum from the American Council on Education](#) and [guidance from the IRS](#).

Charitable organizations are allowed to engage in activities to promote voter registration, encourage voter participation, and provide voter education, including conducting public forums, provided they are carried out in an unbiased manner.

These prohibitions are not intended to restrict free expression on political matters by any individual including those who have a leadership position at Stevens as long as the person is clearly speaking for themselves, as individuals, and are not in any way speaking as an employee or representative of Stevens. Nor are individuals or leaders prohibited from speaking about important issues of public policy. However, to support Stevens' compliance with section 501(c)(3), no individual or leader may make partisan or political comments in any official Stevens (or Stevens' organization) publications or at official Stevens functions or activities of any Stevens organization. Faculty and staff in positions of influence, i.e., with students or student organizations, are reminded to exercise caution in this regard and to consult with the Office of General Counsel if they have questions about these rules.

We commend and encourage engagement by the Stevens community in the civic process and are pleased to report that the Stevens Student Government Association, in cooperation with several other offices and groups, will be conducting a voter registration effort early this semester to reach out to the broader Stevens community—undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff, and alumni.

In addition, Stevens and SGA are partnering with the Hoboken Quality of Life Coalition to host the 2017 Mayoral candidates forum on Wednesday, Oct. 25, at DeBaun Auditorium, a longstanding Hoboken tradition.

With more than 3,000 undergraduates, most of whom live in Hoboken, as well as nearly 200 faculty and staff, 600 alumni and many graduate students who also live in Hoboken, Stevens represents an important constituency within the Hoboken community. We look forward to continuing to be engaged and contributing members of the Hoboken community in the months and years to come.

Sincerely,



Beth McGrath
Chief of Staff and Director
Community & State Relations

