

10.2.5 Policy on Political Activities

Policy Number & Name: Policy on Political Activities

Approval Authority: Administrative Council

Responsible Executive: General Counsel

Responsible Office: Office of the General Counsel

Effective Date: 18 September 2015

Revisions/Updates:

1. Purpose and Summary

The Trustees of the Stevens Institute of Technology's (the "University") status as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code prohibits it from participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office. The University may not endorse a candidate or ballot proposal, provide or solicit financial or other support for candidates or political organizations, or establish political action committees. Participating in political campaigns by or in the name of the University could jeopardize the University's tax-exempt status.

As a general matter, students do not speak on behalf of the University and have more latitude in participating in political campaigns and other activities described by this Policy, whether acting individually or within student clubs and organizations. Because student events frequently occur on the University's campus and under the University's auspices, the University will maintain guidelines to be followed by students, and the administrative staff who oversee student activities, in organizing events on campus involving political themes or participants in order to balance the interests of students and the requirements of this Policy. These guidelines will be administered by the Office of Undergraduate Student Life.

2. Policy Statement

The University is committed to the principle of academic freedom, which is essential to the search for truth and its free expression. Accordingly, the University is committed to free and open discussion of ideas and opinions and encourages University employees, including faculty and staff including without limitation student employees ("University members") to exercise their civic rights to participate as individuals in the political process. At the same time, no University member should feel institutional pressure or pressure by colleagues to contribute to, or perform tasks in support of, a political campaign.

It is the policy of the University not to participate in, directly or indirectly, or to intervene in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for any national, state, or local public office ("Political activity"). Participation includes distributing statements in favor of or opposed to a candidate and making direct campaign contributions of University funds, as well as in-kind, or non-cash, contributions to a candidate, political party, or political action group. Participation also includes the use of a University member's time while at work, office spaces and office supplies (envelopes, paper, etc.), telephones, computers, email and other electronic resources, mailing lists, and photocopy machines.

The accompanying guidelines regarding political activity and the use of University facilities for political activities are designed to help ensure adherence to these fundamental principles. This list is only a sample of the type of uses that are prohibited.

- a. University employees may participate in political activity only as private citizens, not as representatives of the University. When endorsing or opposing a candidate for political office

or taking a position on an issue for the purpose of assisting or opposing a candidate, University members should make it clear that they are speaking only for themselves and that they are not stating a University position. This is particularly important for those who in their official capacity frequently speak for the University.

- b. Fundraising and/or contributions for political candidates or campaigns may not, under any circumstances, be solicited in the name of the University.
- c. University members may not use University funds or attempt to be reimbursed with University funds for any political activity.
- d. University members may not use University resources for any political activity, including but not limited to letterhead, email and other electronic resources, and the University's tax exemption for the purchase of goods and services.
- e. University members or University-sponsored organizations who engage in voter registration or "get out the vote" drives must do so on a non-partisan basis (i.e., they may not focus on a particular party or supporters of a specific candidate).
- f. University members may not post campaign posters or distribute campaign literature on the University campus.
- g. University members may not endorse a political party or candidate as a representative of the University, as part of a University-sponsored event, or in a University-sponsored publication.
- h. University members may not cause political activities or endorsements to be posted to a Stevens-branded webpage or social media channel.
- i. If a candidate for an elected office is invited to speak on campus, the University must provide an equal opportunity to all candidates seeking the same office.
- j. University members may not attempt to influence government officials by providing or offering any benefit in the University's name, using University resources, or on behalf of the University. If a University member is responsible for conducting transactions or handling contracts with governmental agencies, he or she must ensure that they are handled honestly and ethically.

University members must report inappropriate requests for benefits from government officials. If a government representative requests or demands any type of benefit from the University, the member must report the matter immediately to the Office of General Counsel.

Questions about political participation and the University's tax exempt status should be directed to the Office of General Counsel.