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Name: University Policy on Political Activity
Policy Number: 5-1001
Origin: Financial Services
Approved: 16 October 2008
Issuing Authority: President
Responsibility: Vice President, Finance
Effective Date: 16 October 2008

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to establish guidelines for political activity in order to comply with federal tax laws governing tax-exempt organizations.

2.0 Scope

2.1 This policy is applicable to all University Faculty, Staff and the Board of Governors.

3.0 Policy

3.1 It is University policy to permit members of the University community, who wish to do so as a personal activity (i.e. not as a University official or representative), to express their viewpoints on political issues, to participate in political campaigns, to offer themselves as candidates for office, and to hold office.

3.2 The following limitations are necessary to protect the University's independence in academic and business matters, and to insure compliance under the Income Tax Act.

- (a) To preserve, in fact and in appearance, the University's non-partisan and independent basis. In the context of political activity, the University's tax-exempt charity status is contingent upon the university's involvement in political activities being entirely non-partisan in nature. A political activity is considered partisan if it involves direct or indirect support of, or opposition to, a political party or candidate for public office.
- (b) The purchase of tickets or attendance by University officials, in their official capacity, at a fundraising dinner or other events for a politician is not permitted because it conveys the impression of partisan political activity by a registered charity. Registered charities are not permitted to carry on partisan political activities. Saint Mary's will not devote any resources to such activities.
- (c) Donations to political parties or their candidates are not allowable university expenses and may not be charged against university accounts nor will they be reimbursed under any circumstances.
- (d) University resources may not be expended on political activities (including faculty and staff time, space, equipment, supplies and services).

- (e) Individuals must protect against any conflicts of interest or time which may infringe on the ability of University personnel to perform their official duties.

4.0 Allowable Activities

- (a) The University is not necessarily engaging in a political activity when it addresses a government body or the public on legislative and policy matters, where such activity forms a regular part of its activities. Examples include:
- conducting day-to-day business with government agencies (e.g., meeting with officials of the Department of Education)
 - providing governments or the public with specialized information at the University's disposal, or participating in government research
 - expressing the University's views to a governmental body on an issue affecting Saint Mary's ability to carry out its mandate
- (b) When a political party or candidate for public office supports a policy that is also connected to and supported by the University, the University may make the public aware of its position on an issue provided it does not explicitly connect its views to any political party or candidate.
- (c) The University may provide information to its supporters or the public on how **all** the Members of Parliament or the legislature of a province or municipal council voted on an issue connected with the University's purpose. However, the University must not single-out the voting pattern on an issue of any one elected representative or political party.

5.0 Guidelines:

5.1 Political Activities:

- (a) The University will not attempt to influence an individual's personal political affiliation or activity, nor will the University infer that a given political affiliation is expected, desired, or is to be avoided by the faculty or staff.
- (b) Individuals who wish to participate in political activities or to express themselves in the public media on political issues do so as individual citizens. They shall refrain in those activities from using their University titles, the name of the University or University department which may imply that they are acting for or are endorsed by Saint Mary's or that they represent the faculty or staff.

Reasonable efforts must be made to prevent others from such misuse of the name of the University in connection with personal political activity, and to explicitly state that their comments are that of a private citizen.

5.2 Use of University Facilities and Resources

- (a) Organizers of politically partisan events (including faculty or staff acting personally) will be treated as any other group requesting use of University facilities, and will be charged normal facility rental rates.
- (b) Staff and other University resources, such as e-mail, letterhead, mailing lists or labels, office supplies, equipment, duplicating machines, internal mail, bulletin boards and telephones shall not be used for political activities.

- (c) Employees shall not use regularly scheduled University work time for personal political activity.