

Subject: **Political Activities**

Applies to: All University Faculty and Staff

- I. Policy: It is University policy to encourage members of the University faculty and staff who wish to do so as a personal activity to express their viewpoints on political issues, to participate in political campaigns, to offer themselves as candidates for office, and to hold office.

The only limitations the University imposes are those reasonably necessary to protect its independence in academic and business matters, and to insure its adherence to its charter and its compliance with the laws under which it operates. More specifically, those limitations are:

- A. To preserve, in fact and in appearance, the University's non-partisan, independent, tax-exempt status;
- B. To preserve University resources of all sorts (including among others, faculty and staff time, University space, equipment, supplies, and services) for the University's educational, research, and related functions; and,
- C. To protect against any conflicts of interest or time which may infringe on the ability of University personnel to perform their official duties and meet their responsibilities with maximum effectiveness and objectivity.

II. Guidelines:

- 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. Members of the faculty or staff who wish to participate in political activities or to express themselves in the public media on political or social issues do so as individual citizens. They shall refrain in those activities from using their University titles, the name of the University or any University department or organizational unit which may permit the inference that they are acting for or are endorsed by the University of Rochester or that they represent the faculty or staff.
- C. A faculty or staff member is expected to make reasonable efforts to prevent others from such misuse of the name of the University in connection with his or her political activity, and to explicitly state that he or she is acting as a private citizen.
- D. University property, offices, meeting or class rooms, and auditoriums shall not be used by faculty or staff for political purposes or meetings. (This guideline shall not be interpreted to prevent the use of University facilities by duly recognized University of Rochester student organizations for properly scheduled meetings on political topics, nor to prevent faculty and staff from participating in such student meetings, if invited.)

- E. Staff and other University resources, such as University letterhead, University mailing lists or labels, office supplies, equipment, copying and duplicating machines, intramural mail, bulletin boards and telephones shall not be used for political activities.
- F. Faculty and staff members shall not use regularly scheduled University work time for personal political activity.
- G. If a faculty or staff member's University duties and responsibilities relate to his or her political activities or to a public office he or she holds, an adjustment in University assignment may be necessary. Positions which involve the following sorts of activities may be especially subject to review when the incumbent anticipates engagement or is engaged in political activity, or holds public office:
  - (1) public representation of the institution
  - (2) negotiation with government and certain non-governmental agencies, or making or recommending decisions affecting relationships with those agencies
  - (3) access to certain administrative and research records

The aim in making this change should be to remove inferences that the University's position might be used or is being used for political benefit, or that official actions or effectiveness at the University might be altered by political considerations stemming from one's outside activities.

- H. The University will, to the extent feasible without disturbance or interruption of University services, grant use of accumulated leave credits, grant leaves of absence, or arrange changes of assignments or position to facilitate implementation of these guidelines.

### III. Procedure:

- A. Faculty and staff who expect to participate in political activity which could conceivably cause conflict are expected to discuss the matter promptly with the appropriate dean, director or department head. A dean, director or department head who perceives that the activity of a faculty or staff member may involve such a conflict shall initiate such a discussion. The objective of the discussion is a complete understanding and, if necessary, agreement as to a plan for changes of duties, use of paid leave, or other administrative actions sufficient to protect the University's interests.
- B. Political activity shall be regarded as personal business. Any changes of position, use of accrued time off, or leaves of absence shall be provided under the policies and regulations normally applicable to the faculty or staff members concerned.

See also Policies:     #109   Solicitation, Canvassing, and Leafleting Activity Affecting the University  
                          #113   Conflict of Interest