

University Political Endorsements, Activities, and Events Policy

Valparaiso University believes in the free exchange of ideas and beliefs and that learning can occur when one is exposed to, considers, and questions, a diverse range of ideas and beliefs. The political arena is no exception when it comes to University and University constituent sponsored events. However, as a private 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit independent Lutheran University, the University cannot endorse or support any candidate for political office, politician, or political groups or parties. Federal law and/or Internal Revenue Service regulations prohibit tax-exempt organizations, like the University, from such political endorsements or support or from engaging in partisan political activity. The University does not allow, or become a conduit to, any kind of fundraising efforts on behalf of a candidate running for office, political party, or political group and refrains from endorsing political positions.

In furtherance of everything previously stated, this Policy sets forth the parameters in which candidates, office holders, elected officials, politicians, political groups, or anyone known for their political cause may come to campus and address members of the University community or participate in a University sponsored event. This policy also addresses the manner in which members of the University community can, in their capacity as private citizens, provide support to any such person, group, or political cause. This Policy does not apply to student or third party organized protests or any activity subject to the University's Free Speech Policy.

Nothing herein is intended to deprive a faculty member of his/her academic freedom, limit classroom discussion or University forums that aim to educate students and members of the University community on any academic related matters, including those that might otherwise be political in nature; provided that such activity does not give the appearance of endorsement or support of a candidate running for office or a political position on a particular issue or issues (see also under Invitations to Speak at University Events below).

University Support and Endorsement of a Public Policy

Only the University's president can support, endorse, or oppose a public policy position on behalf of the University and will only do so only when the position is ripe for endorsement or opposition and it directly benefits the University's mission with complete disregard of, and no intent to further, any political group or individual, including an elected official, public officer holder, or candidate running for office. For example, the president may endorse or oppose, on behalf of the University, a bill proposed with the US Congress or the Indiana legislature, oppose a court decision or pending litigation, or support a position taken by a government agency. The president cannot endorse, on behalf of the University, a political candidate's platform on the same issue or the candidate him/herself.

Prohibition on the Use of University Facilities or Resources by Candidates Running for Office or Political Organizations

Candidates running for office may not rent or otherwise use University facilities or resources to announce or promote their candidacies or campaigns for office. Political organizations may not rent or otherwise use University facilities or resources to announce or promote their partisan political issues or their support or opposition to political candidates, office holders, or federal or state ballot initiatives.

Debates and Forums

The University's administration, faculty, staff, or student organizations may host debates and forums on campus that are political in nature. This includes debates and forums between opposing candidates running for the same office, two or more people from different political parties or associations, or two or more people with different political positions. If candidates are running for the same office, the University must make good faith attempts to include all legitimate candidates running for that office. All moderators of the event must take a neutral position. Any questions or comments by the moderator must be fair, reasonable, and without the intent to advantage or disadvantage any participants. Each participant shall have an equal opportunity to be heard.

The University's administration may only host such an event upon the approval of the President. Faculty may only host such an event if the event is reasonably related to the hosting faculty member's academic discipline and upon the approval of the Provost. Staff may only host such an event if the event is reasonably related to their scope of employment and upon the approval of the President. Student organizations may only host such an event if the event is reasonably related to the purpose of their organization and upon the approval of the Vice President for Student Life. All University rules related to the use of its facilities shall apply, without regard to the political nature of the event or political position or party of the participants. The University reserves the right to make the hosts or participants bear all costs, beyond any applicable facility use costs, that may result from the event. Those costs may differ on a case by case basis, depending on the issues of the debate or forum and the potential possibility of protests or other matters that may give rise to an increase in security costs, additional burdens on university personnel, or otherwise cause the University to expend additional funds because of the event. The event cannot compromise the safety of the members of the University community or attendees or subject University property to harm.

Any publication promoting the event, including those in physical or electronic form, must contain the statement, "Valparaiso University does not support or endorse any candidate running for public office, any political party, any elected official, or any public office holder. Valparaiso University can only endorse or support a political position by and through its president." The University's students, faculty, and staff shall be permitted to attend the event if their schedule permits and if they choose to attend the event.

Invitations to Speak at a University Event

Student organizations, faculty, or the President or Provost may invite political candidates running for office, office holders, elected officials, politicians, political groups, or any person or party known for their political cause to speak at an event on campus for educational purposes. The purpose of such an event cannot be to further the invitee's political aspirations, position, or party. Faculty may only host such an event if the purpose is reasonably related to the hosting faculty academic discipline and upon the approval of the Provost and such events cannot give the appearance of endorsement or support of a candidate running for office or a political position on a particular issue or issues. In addition, faculty shall make good faith attempts to invite opposing candidate(s) of the invitee(s) or political groups, people or parties holding opposing political views of the invitee(s) to also speak at the event. Student organizations may only host such an event if the event is reasonably related to the purpose of their organization and upon

the approval of the Vice President for Student Life. All University rules related to the use of its facilities shall apply, without regard to the political position or party of the invitee. The University reserves the right to make the hosts or invitee bear all costs, beyond any applicable facility use costs, that may result from the event. Those costs may differ on a case by case basis, depending on the potential controversial perception of the invitee and the potential possibility of protests or other matters that may give rise to an increase in security costs, additional burdens on university personnel, or otherwise cause the University to expend additional funds because of the event. The event cannot compromise the safety of the members of the University community or attendees or subject University property to harm.

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Political Fundraising and Support by University Employees

The University prohibits fundraising of any political nature on campus and will not subsidize such fundraising, directly or indirectly. This includes fundraising on behalf of candidates running for office, office holders, elected officials, politicians, political groups, political causes, or any person or party known for their political cause. University employees are free to support, either financially or by volunteering time and services, any such person, group, or party, in their individual capacity and not as University employees. University employees should make it clear that any such support is from them individually, and not on behalf of the University. University employees will be disciplined if such support might reasonably confuse the public to believe the support is on behalf of the University. University employees are prohibited from providing such support during their working hours or utilizing University property and resources in furtherance of such support.