

**SMITH COLLEGE**  
**Political and Campaign Activities Policy**

**STATEMENT OF POLICY**

Smith College is a charitable entity subject to federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding political and campaign activities. While all members of the college community are free to express political opinions and engage in political activities, it is important that they do so only in their individual capacities and avoid even the appearance that they are speaking or acting for the college in political matters.

Notwithstanding the above, the college does not seek to inhibit the expression of personal political views by any individual in the college community. Faculty, students, and staff may support candidates for office or in furtherance of political causes. There is no restriction on discussion of political issues or teaching of politics or campaign-related topics.

This policy statement addresses campaigns for political office and provides specific guidelines on activities related to campaigns. It also addresses how individuals can avoid having their personal opinions appear to be those of the college as an entity. The following statements provide the foundation for the more specific guidelines:

- Individuals taking political positions for themselves or groups with which they are associated, but not as representatives of the college, should clearly indicate, by words and actions, that their positions are not those of the college and are not being taken in an official capacity on behalf of the college.
- During election campaigns, auditoriums or other facilities may be used by the college, or groups affiliated with the college, for public forums provided that all legally qualified candidates for a public office, or for the nomination of a particular party, are invited and given equal access and opportunity to speak.
- The college is legally prohibited from endorsing candidates for political office or making any contribution of money, goods, or services to candidates; therefore it is important that no person intentionally or unintentionally cause the college to make such an endorsement or contribution.

## **GUIDELINES**

The following guidelines are intended to aid all Smith College community members -- students, staff, and faculty -- in acting consistently with the legal restrictions on the college.

### **Activities Requiring the Use of Facilities or Open Areas on Campus**

Political activities that do not reasonably imply college involvement or identification may be undertaken so long as regular college procedures are followed for the use of facilities. Examples of such activities are:

- Genuine curricular activities aimed at educating students with respect to the political process.
- Use of areas associated with social activities for the distribution of information about political activities and campaigns. No political fundraising is allowed on such an occasion.
- Use of auditoriums or other facilities by members of the Smith College community for partisan political purposes. If an event includes the invitation of a candidate for political office, and the event will be advertised and open to the public, then all candidates for that office must be invited to participate. In any case the individual or group reserving the facility must pay the usual and normal charge, if any, for use of the facility. No political fundraising is allowed at such an event.

Political activities sponsored by the College may include public forums to which all legally qualified candidates for a public office or for the nomination of a particular party are invited and given equal access and opportunity to speak. If candidates are invited individually, all legally qualified candidates for the position must be invited and none favored in relation to the activity. No political fundraising is allowed at such an event.

### **Campaign and Political Activities**

Smith College may not engage in partisan political activity, therefore no person may engage in such activity in the college's name or on its behalf. For example:

- Any and all political activity in support of or opposition to any candidate for elective public office (including giving or receiving funds or endorsements) directly or indirectly using the name of the college is prohibited. Use of college resources for such purposes is also prohibited. When the college's name appears as part of the name of a student organization, such as "Smith Students for George Washington," the organization must make clear that the

opinions expressed are those of the individuals in the organization and not an official opinion of Smith College or its trustees.

- Lobbying or attempting to influence federal, state, or local legislative action or a legislative or administrative official or staff member by using the name of the college may only be authorized by the president or her or his designee. Any lobbying activity, even when authorized, must be conducted in compliance with applicable law. No person may use federally funded contract or grant money received by the college for lobbying activities. Note, however, that individuals may individually attempt to influence the legislative process and use their college title for identification so long as such actions or writings are accompanied by a statement that the person is speaking as an individual and not as a representative of the college. (e.g. “The opinions expressed in this letter are those of the individual(s) signing below and not an official opinion of Smith College or its trustees.”)
- College office addresses and e-mail addresses may not be used as a return mailing address for partisan political mailings. College telephones may not be used for partisan political purposes. However, campus residential telephone services may be used for these purposes. College services, such as interdepartmental mail, electronic mail, and mailing lists; equipment, such as duplicating machines, computers, facsimile machines; and supplies may not be used for partisan political purposes. No college employee may, as part of his or her job, be requested to perform tasks in any way related to partisan political purposes.

### **Use of the Smith College Name and the Seal**

Neither the name nor seal of the college or of any of its departments may be used on letters or other materials intended for partisan political purposes.

### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR INTERPRETATION**

The Office of College Relations, in consultation with the Office of the President, interprets and applies these policies and guidelines. All questions on whether planned activities are consistent with the college's obligations should be addressed directly to the executive director of public affairs or her or his designee. In addition, students and student groups planning political or campaign activities should discuss their plans with the dean of the college or her or his designee. Students and student groups in the School for Social Work planning political or campaign activities should discuss their plans with the dean of the School for Social Work or her or his designee.