

Political Activity Policy

Policy number: 116

Policy owner: President’s Chief of Staff

Date of initial publication: Not available

Date of latest revision: December 21, 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section I. Purpose	1
Section II. Scope and Applicability.....	2
Section III. Definitions	2
Section IV. Lobbying.....	3
Section V. Issue Advocacy	4
Section VI. Gifts to Public Officials.....	6
Section VII. Nonpartisan Political Activities	7
Section VIII. Campaign Activities	8
Section IX. Consequences of Violating This Policy.....	13
Section X. Responsibility for Interpretation	14
Appendix A. Examples of Permitted and Prohibited Political Activities.....	A-1
Appendix B. Political Activity Policy FAQs	B-1

SECTION I. PURPOSE

The University of St. Thomas supports civic education and civic engagement, including participation in political activities by members of the St. Thomas community. The university’s founder, Archbishop John Ireland, was deeply engaged in the social issues of his time and wanted members of the St. Thomas community to be active participants in public life. Promoting civic education and engagement is consistent with the university’s mission to advance the common good. It also is consistent with the university’s Catholic identity and convictions, which set the expectation for St. Thomas community members to foster meaningful dialogue to advance the flourishing of human culture and to work toward a more just and inclusive society.

At the same time, the university’s status as a tax-exempt organization carries constraints on political activity. These constraints extend to the use of the St. Thomas name, finances, facilities and other resources, and to individual members of the St. Thomas community when they are or may be perceived to be representing St. Thomas. Potential consequences for noncompliance are serious and can include loss of the university’s tax-exempt status. Even perceptions of noncompliance can have adverse consequences.

In light of these considerations, this policy:

- provides the St. Thomas community with direction about which types of political activity are constrained and which are permitted;
- establishes expectations for the St. Thomas community in order to avoid noncompliance and perceptions of noncompliance with applicable constraints; and
- encourages the St. Thomas community to foster and participate in civic education and engagement opportunities in ways that are consistent with applicable constraints and the university's mission and convictions.

SECTION II. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This policy governs all activities conducted on the St. Thomas campuses and other property owned, leased or licensed by St. Thomas (including physical, digital and virtual space, such as remote meeting platforms licensed by St. Thomas); all activities conducted or sponsored by St. Thomas, regardless of location and regardless of whether such activities are conducted in person, remotely or in a hybrid format; and all activities that use St. Thomas identifying marks or St. Thomas resources.

The expectations set forth in this policy apply to all St. Thomas students, employees (faculty, staff and student workers), volunteers, licensees, schools, colleges, divisions, departments and other units, and all student clubs and organizations and student media outlets.

SECTION III. DEFINITIONS

When used in this policy, the following terms have the following meanings:

- a. **Ballot initiative** means referenda, constitutional amendments, bond measures and similar policy measures submitted for public vote.
- b. **Candidate** means a person who has made a public statement of or filed their candidacy for public elective office.
- c. **Nonpartisan** means activities or events that are not intended to advance or oppose any particular candidate, campaign or political party.
- d. **Public official** means a holder of elective or appointed office in any branch of federal, state or local government and any of their staff members.
- e. **Recognized** means that a St. Thomas student club or organization or St. Thomas student media outlet is authorized by St. Thomas to exist at the university and use St. Thomas resources (including student activity fees and other available St. Thomas funding) and St. Thomas identifying marks consistent with the St. Thomas community standards.
- f. **St. Thomas community standards** means the St. Thomas mission, convictions, policies and applicable law.
- g. **St. Thomas identifying marks** means the names, logos, seals, insignia, letterhead, domain names (including when used as part of an email, internet or intranet address), and other identifying marks of St. Thomas and its schools, colleges, divisions, departments, programs, centers, institutes, athletic and club teams, student clubs and organizations, and other units.
- h. **St. Thomas resources** means St. Thomas physical assets (such as buildings and equipment); electronic, digital and virtual assets (such as the St. Thomas telephone system, the St. Thomas website, St. Thomas email and social media accounts, and remote communications platforms offered by St. Thomas such as Canvas, Teams and Zoom); intellectual property (such as work product created by St. Thomas employees); personnel time and financial assets (including external funds made

Political Activity Policy

Policy number: 116

Date of initial publication: Not available

Date of latest revision: December 21, 2020

available for use by St. Thomas or any of its employees for a specified purpose, from any external funding source, such as grants, sponsored project funding, private donations and government appropriations).

SECTION IV. LOBBYING

A. What Is Lobbying?

As used in this policy, **lobbying** means any oral or written communication that references and attempts to influence specific legislation, regulations, ballot initiatives or administrative agency decisions (including decisions to award grants), regardless of whether at the federal, state or local level. A communication may be considered lobbying regardless of its format, medium or means of distribution (including, for example, social media posts). Lobbying includes communications with a public official (commonly referred to as **direct lobbying**) and communications with any segment of the general population (commonly referred to as **grassroots lobbying**). However, lobbying does not include legitimate efforts to sell goods or services to be paid for by public funds. It also does not include a media outlet's publication or broadcast of news items, editorial comments or paid advertisements that directly or indirectly urge official action.

B. Lobbying by or on Behalf of St. Thomas

St. Thomas is permitted to engage in direct and grassroots lobbying subject to certain limitations and conditions, including various registration, reporting and recordkeeping requirements. St. Thomas chooses to lobby on a limited number of issues of direct interest to the university. These primarily include measures affecting education, research and grantmaking; measures with implications under Catholic social justice principles; and measures that would significantly affect the St. Thomas community.

Any lobbying conducted by or on behalf of St. Thomas must reflect the university's policy positions and priorities. It also must comply with the St. Thomas community standards (including all applicable lobbying and disclosure rules). To ensure compliance with applicable requirements, the president's chief of staff oversees and coordinates all lobbying efforts by or on behalf of St. Thomas.

No person, other than the St. Thomas president, chief of staff or persons authorized in writing by either of them is permitted to engage in, or authorize others to engage in, lobbying on behalf of St. Thomas or any of its units (including student clubs and organizations). The need for prior authorization applies regardless of whether the lobbying is direct or grassroots.

Consistent with the lobbying exemption for media outlets, recognized St. Thomas student media outlets are permitted to publish news items, editorial content and paid advertisements that seek to influence legislation, regulations, ballot initiatives and administrative agency decisions, so long as (i) they follow professional journalism standards and (ii) no St. Thomas faculty or staff exercise control over their editorial content. No St. Thomas student media outlet or student club or organization is permitted to be organized solely around particular legislation, regulations, ballot initiatives, or efforts to influence them.

C. Lobbying Not on Behalf of St. Thomas

St. Thomas faculty, staff, students and volunteers are permitted to engage in lobbying in their personal capacities, so long as they (i) comply with the St. Thomas community standards (including the university's conflict of interest and outside employment policies and applicable lobbying and disclosure rules), and (ii) do not use St. Thomas resources or St. Thomas identifying marks, except they may accurately identify their position title and St. Thomas association if they make clear it is for identification purposes only and their lobbying is not on behalf of St. Thomas.

St. Thomas does not regulate lobbying by licensees on their own behalf, so long as the licensee does not use St. Thomas identifying marks or St. Thomas resources, other than the licensed facilities, for lobbying.

SECTION V. ISSUE ADVOCACY

A. What Is Issue Advocacy?

As used in this policy, *issue advocacy* means any public engagement to advance or oppose particular causes or ideas, without seeking to influence specific legislation, regulations, ballot initiatives, administrative agency decisions, or a candidate's election.

B. Issue Advocacy Associated with St. Thomas

St. Thomas is permitted to engage in issue advocacy that is consistent with the university's mission and does not function as prohibited campaign activities (discussed in more detail in Section VIII below). St. Thomas chooses to engage in issue advocacy from time to time on issues of interest to the university that are consistent with its mission and convictions.

To avoid being characterized as prohibited campaign activities, issue advocacy should not (i) identify any candidates; (ii) express approval or disapproval of any candidate's positions or actions; (iii) focus on an issue that has been raised as distinguishing between candidates as a means of implicitly endorsing or opposing a candidate; (iv) make reference to voting or an election; or (v) be delivered close in time to an election in which the issue has been a subject of attention, unless it is part of an ongoing series of communications on the same issue that is made independently of the timing of any election.

If an issue advocacy communication is conducted close in time to a scheduled vote on specific legislation or regulations or an administrative agency decision by a public official on a related subject, the communication could be considered lobbying and must comply with the provisions of Section IV of this policy.

To ensure the integrity of the university's issue advocacy and avoid the possibility of crossover into lobbying, persons covered by this policy may only conduct issue advocacy on behalf of St. Thomas, or use St. Thomas resources and St. Thomas identifying marks for issue advocacy, in accordance with this Section V.B.

1. Issue Advocacy by Administrators on Matters Within the Scope of Their Responsibilities

The following St. Thomas administrators are permitted to use St. Thomas resources and St. Thomas identifying marks to conduct, and authorize others to conduct, issue advocacy on matters within the scope of their St. Thomas job responsibilities, as follows:

- President and chief of staff, on behalf of St. Thomas or any of its units regarding any of their interests
- Members of the President's Senior Staff, on behalf of the units they lead regarding their respective units' interests; and, after consultation with the president or chief of staff, on behalf of St. Thomas regarding university interests relating to the Senior Staff member's areas of responsibility
- Rector/Vice President of The Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity (SPSSOD), with respect to the interests of SPSSOD, after consultation with the president
- Deans leading a school or college, with respect to the interests of their school or college, after consultation with the executive vice president and provost
- Executive director of the Center for the Common Good, on behalf of St. Thomas or others regarding interests consistent with the Center's goals, priorities and initiatives and related Catholic social justice principles
- Director of the Office of Sustainability Initiatives, on behalf of St. Thomas regarding interests consistent with the university's sustainability goals, priorities and initiatives and related Catholic social justice principles

The president or chief of staff may grant permission to individual faculty, staff, students or units (including student clubs and organizations) to use St. Thomas resources and St. Thomas identifying marks to conduct issue advocacy on behalf of St. Thomas or others that is not covered by this Section V.B. The president or chief of staff also may delegate authority to other St. Thomas administrators to grant such permissions with respect to particular categories of issues or categories of employees, students or units.

2. Issue Advocacy as Part of an Academic Course or Program

Consistent with academic freedom principles, St. Thomas faculty may choose to incorporate issue advocacy into the required elements of a St. Thomas course or academic program and use St. Thomas resources and St. Thomas identifying marks in connection with such issue advocacy, without further approvals, so long as (a) the issue advocacy is relevant to the course or program subject matter and learning objectives; (b) advocacy communications make clear that the issue advocacy is not on behalf of St. Thomas; and (c) the faculty member preserves students' freedom of expression with respect to any issue advocacy that is conducted. For example, a faculty member may not require students to engage in issue advocacy in favor of or in opposition to a particular cause or position the student disagrees with unless the faculty member permits students to do so without personal attribution or offers students an alternative assignment to engage in simulated issue advocacy as part of a hypothetical exercise.

3. Issue Advocacy by Student Clubs and Organizations

Recognized St. Thomas student clubs and organizations are permitted to use St. Thomas resources and St. Thomas identifying marks to engage in issue advocacy related to their organizational purposes, so long as they comply with the St. Thomas community standards (including this policy and the Student Clubs and Organizations Handbook).

4. Issue Advocacy by Student Media Outlets

Consistent with journalistic custom, recognized St. Thomas student media outlets may engage in issue advocacy through the publication or broadcast of news items, editorial comments or paid advertisements that seek to advance or oppose particular causes or ideas, so long as (i) they follow professional journalism standards and (ii) no St. Thomas faculty or staff exercise control over their editorial content.

C. Issue Advocacy Not Associated with St. Thomas

St. Thomas faculty, staff, students and volunteers are permitted and encouraged to engage in issue advocacy in their personal capacities, outside the scope of their St. Thomas positions and responsibilities, on the issues and causes that matter to them. Individuals who engage in issue advocacy in their personal capacity must comply with the St. Thomas community standards (including but not limited to the university's conflict of interest and outside employment policies). In addition:

- Faculty, staff and volunteers may not use St. Thomas resources or St. Thomas identifying marks in support of issue advocacy conducted in their personal capacities, except they may accurately identify their position title and St. Thomas association if they make clear it is for identification purposes only and their advocacy is not on behalf of St. Thomas.
- Students may use their St. Thomas association, St. Thomas email and on-campus residence address in connection with issue advocacy they conduct in their personal capacity if their advocacy communications make clear they are a student and not acting on behalf of St. Thomas.

St. Thomas does not regulate issue advocacy by licensees, so long as the licensee does not use St. Thomas identifying marks or St. Thomas resources, other than the licensed facilities, for such issue advocacy.

SECTION VI. GIFTS TO PUBLIC OFFICIALS

A. What Is a Gift to a Public Official?

As used in this policy, *gift to a public official* means anything given to a public official without the direct exchange of payment of equal or greater value, unless the item is given or loaned for a political purpose to a candidate, campaign, political action committee (PAC) or political party unit. Giving or loaning such items to these recipients for a political purpose is considered to be a campaign activity (discussed in more detail in Section VIII below).

Gifts to public officials can take many forms. Examples include money; real or personal property; travel; food or beverages; entertainment; attendance at a reception where food or beverages are served; a promise of future employment; loans of money or property on terms more favorable than market terms; the payment, forgiveness or noncollection of loans; giving preferential treatment for purchases; the provision of or payment for services without receiving fair market value compensation in return; and similar items.

Many jurisdictions have strict rules banning or limiting gifts to public officials and requiring disclosure of permitted gifts. These rules generally are intended to avoid the possibility or perception that a public official has been improperly influenced by personal or private interests, rather than acting in the public interest. Depending on the jurisdiction and the type of gift, gift prohibitions may apply only to organizations and individuals registered as lobbyists, or they may apply more broadly.

B. Applicability to St. Thomas, Its Units, Associated Individuals and Licensees

Minnesota prohibits most gifts to public officials by individuals and organizations that engage in lobbying or who have a direct financial interest in a decision that certain local public officials are authorized to make. For example, because St. Thomas conducts lobbying in Minnesota, St. Thomas and its units (including student clubs and organizations) cannot, except under very limited exceptions:

- serve any food or beverages to public officials without the public official paying St. Thomas the market value of the food or beverage, unless given at a reception, meal or meeting away from the public official's place of work and the public official is attending as part of a St. Thomas program in which the public official is making a speech or answering questions as part of the program;
- provide a trinket or memento to a public official unless the trinket or memento costs \$5 or less; or
- provide services to public officials unless the public official pays the fair market value of those services, except for services of insignificant monetary value or services to assist a public official in the performance of their official duties, such as providing advice, consultation, information or communication in connection with legislation or services to constituents.

To ensure compliance with applicable gift prohibitions, written approval from the president or chief of staff is required before (i) giving a gift to a public official on behalf of St. Thomas, (ii) using any St. Thomas resources to provide a gift to any public official, and (iii) using St. Thomas identifying marks in connection with any gift to a public official. If a gift is authorized by the president or chief of staff, the gift must be made in compliance with the St. Thomas community standards (including all applicable laws and rules).

St. Thomas faculty, staff, students and volunteers who wish to make gifts to public officials in their personal capacities (i) cannot use any St. Thomas resources or St. Thomas identifying marks in connection with the gift; (ii) must comply with all applicable laws and regulations governing gifts to public officials; and (iii) must make clear that the gift is not on behalf of St. Thomas.

St. Thomas does not regulate gifts to public officials by licensees, so long as the licensee complies with applicable law and does not use St. Thomas identifying marks or St. Thomas resources, other than the licensed facilities, in connection with such gifts.

SECTION VII. NONPARTISAN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

A. What Are Nonpartisan Political Activities?

As used in this policy, *nonpartisan political activities* means nonpartisan educational endeavors designed to provide instruction on public policy matters that are useful to the individual and beneficial to the community. Political activities are considered nonpartisan if they are not designed or intended to advance or oppose a particular candidate, campaign or political party. Political activities are generally considered nonpartisan educational endeavors if they:

- provide information and analysis supported by facts and objective evaluation to particular stakeholders or the general public, and do not involve substantial use of inflammatory and disparaging terms or conclusions based on strong emotional feelings rather than objective evaluations;
- do not advocate the adoption of specific legislation, regulations, ballot initiatives, or administrative agency decisions; and
- present a sufficiently full and fair exposition of the pertinent facts that allow audiences and participants to form their own opinions or conclusions, independent of any opinion or conclusion that may be presented as part of the activity.

Promoting civic engagement and helping the public participate in elections are considered nonpartisan educational endeavors, so long as these activities are not designed or intended to advance or oppose particular candidates, campaigns or political parties.

B. Nonpartisan Political Activities Associated with St. Thomas

St. Thomas and members of the St. Thomas community are permitted and encouraged to engage in nonpartisan political activities, so long as the activities comply with the St. Thomas community standards (including this policy). However, some kinds of educational activities are only considered nonpartisan under specified conditions. To ensure that political activities will be considered nonpartisan and educational, St. Thomas requires advance review and approval of some nonpartisan political activities proposed to be conducted by or on behalf of St. Thomas, or that would use St. Thomas resources or St. Thomas identifying marks. Review and approval requirements are detailed below.

Appendix A describes common examples of nonpartisan political activities and the conditions under which they can be conducted by individuals covered by this policy, subject to the advance review and approval requirements below.

1. Consultation Requirements for Academic Activities

Classes, discussions, presentations and academic research and scholarship relating to political issues, public policy or political techniques, if germane and appropriate to an academic course or curriculum or part of a faculty member's field of research or scholarship, are consistent with the university's educational mission and permitted to be conducted using St. Thomas resources and St. Thomas identifying marks, so long as they do not crossover into prohibited campaign activities. To avoid inadvertent crossover, any candidate visits (whether in-person, virtual or telephonic) to a class, program or other event requires prior consultation with the vice provost for academic affairs, who will coordinate with the chief of staff as appropriate.

Consistent with academic freedom principles, faculty may express their views regarding the adoption of specific legislation, regulations, ballot initiatives or administrative agency decisions as part of a class or other academic activity, without affecting the nonpartisan nature of the activity, if such expression is relevant to the subject matter or learning objectives of the activity and faculty do not present their personal views as representing the university.

Faculty, staff and student employees conducting research, scholarship or other professional engagement involving political campaigns should consult with the Office of General Counsel to ensure the activities will be considered nonpartisan and consistent with applicable legal constraints. Academic research or scholarship proposals also must be submitted in advance to the Institutional Review Board as appropriate under applicable policies and procedures.

Except as described in this Section VII.B.1, nonpartisan political activities that are part of an academic endeavor do not require advance review or approval.

2. Advance Review and Approval Requirements for Non-Academic Activities, Including by Student Clubs and Organizations

The following nonpartisan political activities require advance review and written permission by the president's chief of staff or the chief of staff's designee:

- Nonpartisan political activities that are not described in Section VII.B.1 above and that are proposed to be sponsored by St. Thomas or any of its units (including student clubs and organizations).
- Nonpartisan political activities that use St. Thomas resources or St. Thomas identifying marks.

The chief of staff coordinates nonpartisan political activities in cooperation with the Center for the Common Good and the Dean of Students Office. Proposals for non-academic, nonpartisan political activities, including but not limited to all non-academic invited appearances at St. Thomas by a candidate or incumbent elected official (regardless of whether the appearance is in-person, telephonic or virtual), must be submitted to the chief of staff or one of these cooperating units before any commitment is made to an outside party to proceed with the activity.

In order to be approved, any appearances by candidates or their designees, other than for direct campaigning or voter registration in on-campus residence halls as described in Section VIII.H, must meet the conditions set forth in **Appendix A** for candidate appearances as well as the following criteria, regardless of the capacity in which the candidate appears:

- The appearance must be sponsored by a St. Thomas unit (including recognized St. Thomas student clubs and organizations);
- The event must first be open to the entire St. Thomas student, faculty and staff community (without preference based on political affiliation) and then, if space permits, may be open to the general public (without preference based on political affiliation); and
- The event must meet any additional criteria appropriate for the particular event as determined by the president, chief of staff or their designee(s).

SECTION VIII. CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

A. What Are Campaign Activities?

As used in this policy, ***campaign activities*** means any activities that directly or indirectly support or oppose a political campaign or the election of any candidate to public elective office—in other words, activities that are partisan in nature. Campaign activities include (i) the solicitation or contribution of money, goods, services, volunteers or other items in support of or in opposition to a political campaign, candidate, political party, PAC or the like, and (ii) any statements or other expression that supports or opposes a political campaign, candidate or political party. Such statements and expression are considered to be campaign activities regardless of whether the statement or expression is oral, written or in another form, and regardless of the medium or platform by which the statement or expression is shared.

B. Prohibition on Campaign Activities by St. Thomas, Including the Use of St. Thomas Resources and St. Thomas Identifying Marks

St. Thomas is absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate. St. Thomas wishes to ensure compliance with the prohibition on campaign activities by St. Thomas, and to avoid potential perceptions of noncompliance. Therefore, St. Thomas prohibits the use of St. Thomas resources and St. Thomas identifying marks for campaign activities that St. Thomas has determined may be attributable to St. Thomas or suggest that St. Thomas favors or opposes a particular candidate, campaign or political party. In addition, St. Thomas prohibits its faculty, staff, students, volunteers and licensees from engaging in any conduct or expression that St. Thomas determines could reasonably be perceived as engagement in campaign activities by St. Thomas or as an endorsement or support by St. Thomas for or against a political campaign, candidate or political party.

Accordingly, no person may engage in any campaign activities on behalf of St. Thomas, and no person may use any St. Thomas resources or St. Thomas identifying marks to engage in campaign activities, except as provided in the remainder of this Section VIII. Unless otherwise permitted in this Section VIII, this prohibition on campaign activities by St. Thomas includes, but is not limited to, a prohibition on:

- endorsements of or expressions of support for or opposition to candidates by St. Thomas or its employees or volunteers in their capacity as St. Thomas employees or volunteers or in locations that may give rise to the implication of endorsement by St. Thomas (such as offices, classrooms, common spaces, windows, outdoor spaces, and virtual backgrounds used by employees or volunteers for St. Thomas courses and meetings);
- engagement in fundraising on behalf of any political campaign, candidate, political party, PAC or the like by St. Thomas or its employees or volunteers in their capacity as St. Thomas employees or volunteers, including the use of St. Thomas resources (such as St. Thomas facilities, email addresses, office addresses or communication platforms or systems) for campaign fundraising;
- the distribution of campaign materials by St. Thomas employees, volunteers or others who may be perceived to be working on behalf of St. Thomas or in locations that may give rise to the implication of endorsement by St. Thomas; and
- the use of St. Thomas work hours for campaign activities.

While, under specified circumstances, St. Thomas legally may permit external parties to license space from St. Thomas to conduct campaign activities, St. Thomas has made the determination not to permit partisan political activities in its facilities, as described in Section VIII.C.

Appendix A contains more detailed examples of prohibited campaign activities. If you have any questions about the permissibility of a proposed activity, contact the president's chief of staff or the Office of General Counsel in advance of engaging in the activity to obtain appropriate guidance.

C. Engagement in Campaign Activities by Short-Term Licensees of St. Thomas Facilities

St. Thomas does not permit the use of its facilities by external organizations or individuals for partisan political activities (such as political caucuses by a single party, campaign fundraisers or other campaign activities in support of a particular candidate, campaign, political party, PAC or the like), other than primary elections involving a single party if requested by a precinct official. However, candidates, campaigns, political parties and the like may, of their own initiative, seek to reserve and pay for the short-term use of St. Thomas facilities and resources for other purposes, and St. Thomas may permit such uses as detailed in **Appendix A**. Any external request to use St. Thomas facilities in connection with the appearance of a candidate (for non-campaign activities) must be reviewed in advance by the president's chief of staff. The request must include copies of any publicity that will be used in association with the event and information about the desired time and location for the proposed event.

With the prior approval of the president's chief of staff, St. Thomas may license facilities and other resources (such as audiovisual equipment) to external parties for nonpartisan purposes involving campaigns or voting activities (such as public forums or debates, voter registration or the holding of general elections) so long as the activities do not favor or oppose a particular candidate, campaign or party.

D. Course Credit for Campaign Activities

St. Thomas is permitted to offer course credit to students who participate in campaign activities as interns or as part of an approved course curriculum. Course credit may be offered only if (i) participation in campaign activities is permitted at the election of each student individually, and not a required component of the course, such that students are not mandated to engage in campaign activities if they do not wish to do so; (ii) the course curriculum delineates how participation in campaign activities relates to the educational goals of the course or degree requirements; and (iii) St. Thomas retains no control over the student's selection of a campaign in which to participate (though St. Thomas can specify the level of involvement required to earn course credit).

E. Sharing of Personal Views About Candidates, Campaigns and Political Parties as Part of Classes and Other Teaching Activities

Academic freedom principles afford faculty greater leeway to share partisan perspectives when engaged in teaching activities. In discussions with their students, whether during or outside of a class setting, faculty, acting in good faith, may explicitly share their personal views in support or opposition to a candidate, campaign or political party if they do not present their personal views as representing the university. Faculty members should work to ensure that the sharing of partisan views in classroom discussions has some relevance to the learning objectives for the discussion. They also should work to facilitate discussions in a manner consistent with the St. Thomas mission and convictions.

Courses in a range of disciplines call for the open and critical discussion of topics that may be deemed political at a given time. There is a rebuttable presumption that the inclusion of such topics in a course will not be considered a partisan action on the part of the faculty member. Faculty will be allowed wide leeway on course content and student engagement with these topics where they can reasonably be considered part of the discipline and/or particular subject matter covered by the course. When faculty members share their personal views about candidates, campaigns and political parties, the faculty member should be mindful of their position of authority. When faculty members share their personal views in the classroom, they should be aware of the context of the classroom as a place committed to free inquiry that welcomes and benefits from multiple points of view. To that end, the faculty member should strive in good faith to share their views in a manner that will assure students that the faculty member:

- will respect students' freedom to choose for themselves whether or how to support or oppose a particular candidate, campaign or political party;
- will not discriminate or retaliate against any student based on any views expressed;
- will not require any student to share their personal views about any candidate, campaign or political party; and
- is not trying to influence students to support or oppose a particular candidate, campaign or political party.

F. Permitted Involvement in Campaign Activities by Student Media Outlets

Consistent with customary journalistic practice and IRS guidance, recognized St. Thomas student media outlets are permitted to make independent endorsements of candidates, consistent with professional journalism standards, so long as (i) no St. Thomas faculty or staff exercise any control over the outlet's

editorial content; and (ii) the endorsement is accompanied by a published disclaimer that the endorsement reflects the views of the student editors and does not constitute endorsement by St. Thomas.

Recognized St. Thomas student media outlets also may accept paid political advertising, so long as (i) ads are solicited in a fair manner according to established guidelines; (ii) acceptance of the ad is on the same basis as other, nonpolitical advertising; (iii) all candidates, campaigns, political parties and others who wish to use the media outlet for paid political advertising are given equal time or space at the same rates; and (iv) the advertisement is preceded by a statement that it is paid advertising and not reflective of the views of St. Thomas or the student media outlet.

G. Permitted Involvement in Campaign Activities by Student Clubs and Organizations

As part of its educational offerings, St. Thomas provides students with the opportunity to participate in numerous recognized student clubs and organizations. Recognized student clubs and organizations are organized for purposes consistent with the university's mission and convictions, providing students with opportunities for education, leadership development, community-building and community engagement in areas of student interest. Although recognized student clubs and organizations are expected to uphold the St. Thomas community standards, they are not expected to represent the views of St. Thomas, and they are not controlled by St. Thomas faculty and staff so long as they uphold the St. Thomas community standards. Accordingly, St. Thomas permits student clubs and organizations to be organized to support a single political party, such as the College Democrats or College Republicans, and recognizes such organizations on the same basis as other recognized student clubs and organizations.

Student clubs and organizations that are not recognized by St. Thomas may not use any St. Thomas resources or St. Thomas identifying marks to engage in campaign activities. Recognized St. Thomas student clubs and organizations and their members may engage in campaign activities and use St. Thomas resources and St. Thomas identifying marks in accordance with the following provisions:

- **Permitted use of physical and virtual facilities and spaces:** Recognized student clubs and organizations may use St. Thomas facilities to conduct meetings where they discuss political or campaign issues or host the appearance of a candidate, consistent with the purposes of their club or organization and the requirements of this policy, including obtaining required permissions for any candidate appearances in accordance with the requirements for nonpartisan political activities set forth in Section VII (except that candidates may be invited on a partisan basis). The student club or organization must observe all other St. Thomas policies regarding the use of campus spaces and facilities, and following any usual requirements for such use, including the payment of any usual facilities fees that apply to use of the particular space or facility.
- **Permitted notice of meetings involving campaign activities on the recognized student club or organization website, so long as a disclaimer is included:** Recognized student clubs and organizations may publish a notice on Tommie Link and (if applicable) their OneStThomas website to inform members of the St. Thomas community of events sponsored by the recognized student club or organization involving campaign activities, so long as it includes the required disclaimer below. Such events must be open to St. Thomas students on the same basis as other meetings or events of the student club or organization.
- **Permitted endorsements if disclaimer is included:** Recognized student clubs and organizations, other than St. Thomas student government units, may endorse candidates so long as (i) no St. Thomas faculty or staff, and no student government unit that allocates funding to the club or organization, exercise any control over the membership's decision or choice of endorsement; (ii) the membership of the club or organization has been given an opportunity to vote on such an endorsement and supports the endorsement; and (iii) the endorsement is accompanied by the required disclaimer below. The endorsement may not appear on any websites of recognized student clubs and organizations that reside on the university's network or linked to the university's website,

but may appear in social media posts from the social media account of the recognized student club or organization so long as the required disclaimer is included and the post does not otherwise refer to or include a hashtag referencing the university itself. Additionally, the name and recognized St. Thomas student club or organization affiliation of a member of such a student club or organization may appear in campaign literature or on a list of supporters of a candidate or political organization that includes the required disclaimer.

- **Permitted distribution of campaign literature if disclaimer is included:** Recognized student clubs and organizations, other than St. Thomas student government units, may distribute campaign literature in St. Thomas facilities in accordance with tabling policies established by the Dean of Students Office, so long as the student club or organization makes clear that the activity does not have the support or endorsement of St. Thomas and any materials and oral presentations include the required disclaimer below.
- **No use of St. Thomas student club or organization funding, fundraising or other St. Thomas funding:** Because no St. Thomas funding can be used for campaign activities, and no campaign fundraising can be conducted using St. Thomas resources or St. Thomas identifying marks, student clubs and organizations are not permitted to engage in partisan fundraising or to use their funding (which may include allocations from student activity fees, external fundraising and other available St. Thomas funding) to support campaign activities (except that recognized student clubs and organizations organized around a political party identity can use their funds to promote their own club or organization). For example, no recognized student organization or individual may use their club, organization or other St. Thomas funds or its sales tax exemption to pay honoraria, transportation, support services, accommodation or food or beverage expenses for candidates, or to purchase campaign material, pay for campaign ads, or contribute money or purchase goods or services to benefit a political campaign or candidate. These uses of funds may be considered to be a prohibited campaign gift or donation.
- **No use of other St. Thomas resources except as expressly permitted above:** Except for the name and logo of their recognized student club or organization (which may include the use of a sign or banner maintained by the student club or organization solely for identification purposes at events, which only contains their name and logo), and the use of resources as permitted in the preceding bullets, recognized student clubs and organizations may not use any other St. Thomas resources in the planning or conduct of any campaign activities (including, but not limited to, supplies, materials or equipment made available by St. Thomas to student clubs and organizations for non-campaign activities).
- **Required disclaimer for communications involving campaign activities by St. Thomas student clubs and organizations:** “This [event OR endorsement OR publication OR solicitation] is solely by the [name of recognized student club or organization] without support or endorsement of the University of St. Thomas. The University of St. Thomas does not participate in political campaigns on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.”

H. Permitted Campaign Activities in On-Campus Residences

Subject to Sections H.1 and H.2 below, residents of St. Thomas student residence halls or other on-campus residences (including individuals renting single-family homes owned by St. Thomas) are free to use their on-campus residence address for any communications relating to campaign activities and to engage in campaign activities (including fundraising) within the interior of their assigned campus residence room, suite, apartment or house in accordance with any applicable residence agreement and residence policies, so long as (i) the activities do not otherwise use St. Thomas resources, and (ii) employees residing in on-campus residences make clear the activities are conducted in their personal capacity and not on behalf of St. Thomas.

1. Candidate Visits for Direct Campaigning and Voter Registration

As required by applicable law, candidates seeking election in the next general or special election for a public elective office who, if elected, would represent districts or territories encompassing the St. Thomas campus may access multi-unit student residence halls and other multi-unit campus residences, accompanied by a reasonable number of campaign volunteers, exclusively for the purpose of campaigning for the candidate or registering voters. No resident is required to admit a candidate to their assigned residence space or to communicate with candidates or accept campaign materials.

St. Thomas may limit candidate visits to reasonable hours and may require pre-arranged appointments and identification before admitting candidates to residence buildings. On-campus student residence halls and multi-unit residences can only be accessed by a candidate and their volunteers one building at a time, but St. Thomas is not permitted to require all candidates and accompanying volunteers traveling together to access the same building at the same time. Any campaign materials distributed in on-campus residences during such visits must be distributed in an orderly manner, and campaign materials cannot be distributed outside of the on-campus residences visited by the candidate.

The Department of Residence Life has responsibility for coordinating and complying with legal requirements relating to candidate visits to on-campus residences.

2. Display of Campaign Materials

Residents of St. Thomas student residence halls or other on-campus residences, including individuals renting single-family homes owned by St. Thomas, may display signs, banners and other campaign materials within the interior of their assigned campus residence room, suite, apartment or house in accordance with any applicable residence agreement and residence policies, except that no campaign materials may be displayed in any residence windows, exterior surfaces or lawns. It is not always apparent which campus buildings are residential or which windows are associated with private rooms; therefore, posting campaign materials in residence windows or on the exterior of buildings or lawns could lead to a perception that St. Thomas is engaging in prohibited campaign activities.

I. Permitted Personal Involvement in Campaign Activities

St. Thomas faculty, staff, students and volunteers are free and encouraged to engage in campaign activities in their personal capacities in their discretion, so long as they (i) do not overtly or implicitly involve St. Thomas; and (ii) uphold the St. Thomas community standards, including but not limited to this policy, the university's conflicts of interest and outside employment policies, the Student Policy Regarding Expression, Demonstrations, and Sponsorship of Speakers and Organizations, and the St. Thomas convictions valuing intellectual inquiry, rewarding rigorous thinking, respecting the dignity of each person, and valuing the unique contributions that each brings to the greater mosaic of the university community. Faculty and staff who take part in campaign activities must not do so at the expense of their regular responsibilities to St. Thomas and its students.

Appendix A identifies specific campaign activities that are permitted by members of the St. Thomas community in their personal capacities.

Licensees and others who have entered into contracts with St. Thomas also must comply with any provisions on campaign activities in the agreements they have entered with St. Thomas.

SECTION IX. CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATING THIS POLICY

Failure to comply with this and related policies is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or dismissal, in accordance with applicable disciplinary procedures.

SECTION X. RESPONSIBILITY FOR INTERPRETATION

When political activities not expressly described in this policy are under consideration, additional analysis will be required to ensure compliance. Students who have questions on whether planned student activities are consistent with this policy should contact the director of campus life. Employees who have questions about the interpretation of this policy should contact the president's chief of staff or Office of General Counsel for guidance before initiating, advertising or promoting any proposed activity.

Appendix A to Political Activity Policy

Examples of Permitted and Prohibited Political Activities

Date of initial publication: September 3, 2020

Date of latest revision: December 21, 2020

To provide greater direction to the St. Thomas community, this Appendix provides examples of political activities that are permitted and prohibited under various circumstances. Please note that examples of permitted activities listed in this Appendix may still require advance approval in accordance with the Political Activity Policy (“Policy”), and you should always check the Policy before proceeding with a particular activity. If you have any questions about particular activities, students should contact the Dean of Students Office, and faculty and staff should contact the president’s chief of staff or the Office of General Counsel.

SECTION I. PERMITTED, NONPARTISAN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

The table below describes common examples of nonpartisan political activities that are generally permitted to be conducted by St. Thomas or using St. Thomas resources or St. Thomas identifying marks. While these activities are generally permitted, they still are subject to applicable advance review and approval requirements set forth in Sections VII.A and VII.B of the Policy.

NONPARTISAN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES THAT ARE PERMITTED SUBJECT TO THE ADVANCE REVIEW AND APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS OF POLICY SECTIONS VII.A and VII.B	
1.	Inviting candidates to appear in a non-candidate capacity as a recognized public figure , whether the appearance is in-person, telephonic, digital or virtual, so long as (a) the invitee is chosen to participate solely for reasons other than their candidacy (for example, as a current or former public officeholder, an expert in a non-political field, or as a celebrity or someone who has led a distinguished career); (b) the invitee is informed that the event is non-political, and the invitee commits to appear only in the non-candidate capacity that is the basis for the invitation; (c) the capacity in which the invitee is appearing is clearly indicated in any communications about the event and stated in the introduction to the event; (d) the invitee participates only in their non-candidate capacity; (d) no reference to the invitee’s candidacy or the election is made at the event or in any communications announcing the invitee’s attendance at the event; (e) campaign activities at the event are prohibited; and (f) a nonpartisan atmosphere is maintained at the event and near the event premises.
2.	Providing candidates with opportunities to appear in their capacity as candidates , whether the appearance is in-person, telephonic, digital or virtual, so long as (a) all legally qualified candidates have an equal opportunity to appear (e.g., a similar time, venue, format and audience size) and none is favored; (b) St. Thomas makes reasonable efforts to ensure the appearances constitute educational or informational discussions, forums or talks to the St. Thomas community, question-and-answer sessions, political debates, or similar communications in an academic setting and are not constructed as campaign rallies or events intended to assist or support a particular candidate; (c) any communications about the event or a candidate’s appearance at the event, and the event introduction,

**NONPARTISAN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES THAT ARE PERMITTED SUBJECT TO THE
ADVANCE REVIEW AND APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS OF POLICY SECTIONS VII.A and VII.B**

include an explicit statement that St. Thomas does not support or oppose any candidate appearing at the event; and (d) campaign activities at the event (such as campaign fundraising or the distribution of campaign materials), other than the candidate's own statements at the event, are prohibited. If there are so many legally qualified candidates as to make it impractical to invite all of them to appear, consult with the Office of General Counsel.

3. Conducting public forums with candidates for either a primary or general election, whether the forum is in-person, telephonic, digital or virtual, so long as (a) all qualified candidates for the election are invited to the event; (b) the format and content of the forum are presented in a neutral manner, with questions prepared and presented by a nonpartisan panel or audience members; (c) the discussion covers a broad range of issues of interest to the public; (d) each participating candidate has an equal opportunity to speak; (e) the moderators and St. Thomas representatives do not comment on the questions, answers or candidates; (f) any communications about the event or a candidate's appearance at the event, and the event introduction, include an explicit statement that St. Thomas does not support or oppose any candidate appearing at the event; and (g) campaign activities at the event (such as campaign fundraising or the distribution of campaign materials), other than the candidate's own statements at the event, are prohibited, except that if all legally qualified candidates appear at the event, each may distribute its own campaign literature. If there are so many legally qualified candidates as to make it impractical to invite all of them to appear, consult with the Office of General Counsel.

4. Uninvited appearances by candidates in their non-candidate capacity at events open to the public, so long as (a) the candidate is not provided an opportunity to speak publicly at the event; (b) there are no campaign activities at the event (such as campaign fundraising or the distribution of campaign materials); and (c) there is no express or implied endorsement of the candidate by a St. Thomas representative or other public speaker at the event.

5. Providing candidates with access to air time on the St. Thomas radio station, so long as it is provided on an equal basis to all legally qualified candidates, in a manner consistent with the limits imposed by Federal Communications Commission (FCC) standards.

6. Linking to the official websites of all the legally qualified candidates for an election, so long as the links are presented (a) in an educational context and for informational purposes and (b) in a consistent, unbiased manner. Note that this activity is permissible only if all legally qualified candidates sites are linked. Many elections involve large numbers of minor candidates, so before linking to any websites, it is important to confirm which candidates are legally qualified.

7. Licensing (renting) St. Thomas facilities on a short-term basis to candidates, campaigns, political parties and the like (including for use as a party's caucus site), whether the facilities are in-person, telephonic, digital or virtual, so long as (a) the space is commonly licensed by St. Thomas to outside groups; (b) St. Thomas charges its usual and customary rates for the short-term license; (c) all candidates, campaigns and political parties have the same, realistic opportunity in the same election to license the facilities on an equal basis and are treated the same; (d) if the facilities are used for an event that involves the distribution of invitations, media statements or publicity, any communications about the event or a candidate's appearance at the event, and the event introduction, include an explicit statement that St. Thomas does not support or oppose any candidate involved in the event; (e) the facilities are not used for campaign fundraising; and (f) a nonpartisan atmosphere is maintained on the outside the licensed facilities. However, while St. Thomas is permitted to license its facilities for these

**NONPARTISAN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES THAT ARE PERMITTED SUBJECT TO THE
ADVANCE REVIEW AND APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS OF POLICY SECTIONS VII.A and VII.B**

purposes, St. Thomas discourages the use of its facilities by external parties for partisan purposes and reserves the right not to license facilities for use by external parties for partisan purposes.

8. Participating in nonpartisan voter registration activities and get-out-the-vote drives, whether the activities are in-person, telephonic, digital or virtual, and even when aimed at groups (such as urban voters, young people or underrepresented populations) likely to favor a certain political candidate or party, so long as (a) the activities are conducted in a neutral, nonpartisan manner that is designed to increase public understanding of the electoral process and encourage participation in that process, without referencing any candidate or political party or favoring or opposing one or more candidates; (b) the activities are not intended to target voters of a particular party or to help particular candidates; and (c) particular geographic areas are not selected such that the effect of the selection favors any party or candidates.

9. Conducting training programs designed to increase public understanding of the electoral process or to encourage citizens to become involved in the process, whether the programs are in-person, telephonic, digital or virtual, so long as the program is (a) nonpartisan in the recruitment of instructors, the selection of participants and the curriculum, and (b) widely publicized, although groups underrepresented in the electoral process may be targeted.

10. Preparing and distributing a voter guide to inform the public of attitudes or actions of elected representatives or candidates, so long as the guide (a) covers all legally qualified candidates or all members of an elective body; (d) does not include ratings of candidates, even if the rating criteria are nonpartisan (e.g., based on professional qualifications); (c) covers a broad range of issues; (d) refrains from judging the candidates or their positions; and (e) does not tie a position articulated in the guide to a particular candidate or election. Typically, this would be a faculty-led project.

11. Annually preparing and distributing a compilation of voting records to report the activities of a body of lawmakers, so long as the compilation (a) does not reference any campaign, election or an incumbent's candidacy; (b) covers major legislative issues on a wide range of subjects and is not focused on a specialized range of issues; (c) is not geared to coincide with the election period; (d) does not tie an incumbent's vote on a legislative issue to any position supported or opposed by St. Thomas; and (e) does not compare one incumbent's positions with another's or suggest approval or disapproval of any vote.

12. Circulating unbiased candidate questionnaires and tabulating and disseminating the results, so long as (a) the questionnaire is distributed to all legally qualified candidates for the elective office; (b) the questionnaire covers a broad range of subjects; (c) the questionnaire does not reflect political skew or contain editorial opinion; (d) questions are not phrased to suggest a preferred answer; (e) candidates are given a reasonable amount of time to respond to the questionnaire; (f) if the questionnaire includes questions with "yes" or "no" answers, candidates are given an opportunity to explain their answers; (g) all candidate responses are published without substantive editing; and (h) the candidates' responses are not compared with any position taken by St. Thomas. Typically, this would be a faculty-led project.

13. Conducting public opinion polls with respect to issues (rather than candidates), so long as (a) the questions are framed to be fair and neutral; (b) accepted polling techniques are used; and (c) the questions do not directly or indirectly concern records or positions of particular candidates or parties. Typically, this would be a faculty-led project.

NONPARTISAN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES THAT ARE PERMITTED SUBJECT TO THE ADVANCE REVIEW AND APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS OF POLICY SECTIONS VII.A and VII.B
14. Serving as a polling site for an election , if requested by precinct officials, so long as the election is open to candidates and voters regardless of party affiliation.
15. Rearranging the academic calendar to permit students, faculty and staff to participate in the election process, if the rearrangement is made without reference to particular campaigns or political issues, provided that any recess provided is in substitution for another period that would have been free of curricular activity.
16. Establishing genuine curricular activities aimed at educating students with respect to the political process, such as a political science program in which, as part of a credit-bearing course, students participate in several weeks of classroom work to learn about campaign methods, and then are excused from classes for a period of time to participate in campaigns of their choice, without St. Thomas or its employees or volunteers influencing which campaigns are chosen.
17. Providing financial and administrative support to student media outlets , even though the media outlet publishes editorial opinions on candidates and other political and legislative matters or may accept advertising from political candidates, so long as no St. Thomas faculty or staff exercise any control over the student media outlet's editorial content.
18. Engaging in issue advocacy as permitted under Section V of this policy.
19. Using campus communication mechanisms to announce approved nonpartisan political activities , so long as all such communications and postings comply with the St. Thomas community standards and contain any required statements described above for the particular activity.

SECTION II. PROHIBITED CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

The table below describes common examples of campaign activities that are prohibited to be conducted by St. Thomas or using St. Thomas resources or St. Thomas identifying marks.

PROHIBITED CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES
<p>1. No use of the university's physical resources by a candidate, campaign, political party, PAC or the like at the initiation of St. Thomas or free of charge. Examples of resources that may not be provided include mailing and distribution lists or the use of office space, telephones, computers, copiers or other St. Thomas facilities, equipment or supplies. St. Thomas may only provide such resources to a candidate if (a) St. Thomas routinely offers the resources for external use in exchange for payment; (b) the request for use of the resources is initiated by a candidate; and (c) the resources are made available to all candidates and political parties on the same terms and at customary rates charged by St. Thomas.</p> <p>Although St. Thomas could permit partisan activities on campus under the preceding conditions, St. Thomas has made a determination not to permit the use of its facilities for partisan political activities by external parties.</p>
<p>2. No use of the university's electronic, digital and virtual resources for campaign activities. The St. Thomas email systems, email addresses, internal and external websites, and digital and virtual communication platforms (such as Teams and Zoom), electronic directories, databases, electronic sign boards, and other electronic, digital and virtual communication systems, sites and resources cannot be</p>

PROHIBITED CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

used for campaign activities (but see Section VIII.E of the policy regarding the sharing of partisan views during classes and other teaching activities). For discussion and comment areas on public websites published by or associated with St. Thomas where the information could reasonably be attributed to St. Thomas, the public discussion or comment area should include a disclaimer stating that the comments and opinions are neither those of St. Thomas nor sanctioned by St. Thomas.

- 3. No use of St. Thomas resources or St. Thomas identifying marks (including St. Thomas email addresses) to raise funds to benefit a campaign, candidate, political party or PAC**, whether through contributions, donations, admissions, fees or sale of materials or services, except that residents of on-campus housing may use their St. Thomas residence address for such fundraising.
- 4. No use of campus buildings, grounds or addresses for campaign activities**, except for on-campus residence addresses used by campus residents in accordance with Section VIII.
- 5. No providing hyperlinks to websites that favor or oppose candidates**, except for links provided in the same location to the official websites of all legally qualified candidates for an election so long as (a) the links are provided in an educational context and for informational purposes (for example, in a nonpartisan voter guide); and (b) the links are provided in a consistent, unbiased manner.
- 6. No provision of any forum to promote the candidate's campaign**, even if the forum is not intended to assist the candidate, except as permitted in Section VII of this policy. Forums can include both physical space for events or the display of campaign materials, physical systems such as the interdepartmental mail system, electronic systems like email and messaging systems, print space like inclusion in a hard-copy or digital newsletter, or opportunities for communication in other communication platforms.
- 7. No use of the St. Thomas name, logos or letterhead** in support of a candidate, campaign, political party, PAC or the like, except that individuals engaging in permitted campaign activities in their personal capacity may accurately identify their St. Thomas position and association if they indicate that it is listed for identification purposes only and they make clear they are not acting on behalf of St. Thomas.
- 8. No St. Thomas sponsorship of campaign events or volunteer opportunities** to advance or oppose the election of candidates, such as hosting or organizing volunteers for campaign rallies, fundraisers or door-knocking by campaigns, other than permitted campaign activities by student clubs and organizations as detailed in Section VIII.
- 9. No use of St. Thomas work hours or professional services to support campaign activities.** No St. Thomas faculty, staff member, student worker or volunteer may engage in campaign activities during their St. Thomas work hours or, as part of their St. Thomas job, volunteer or contracted duties, be asked to perform tasks that support campaign activities. No St. Thomas professional services, such as campus mail services, marketing professionals, fundraising professionals, or services offered by the university's Inter-Professional Clinic, may be used for campaign activities.
- 10. No advising, directing or coercing St. Thomas employees, students or volunteers to make a contribution to a candidate, political party or PAC**, though a St. Thomas employee may suggest to another employee in a noncoercive manner that the other employee may voluntarily contribute to a fund administered by a political party, committee, organization, agency, person, labor union or other employee organization for political purposes. St. Thomas email and other St. Thomas communication platforms may not be used for campaign fundraising, including the planning of or invitations to campaign fundraisers held at a personal residence or other location that is not owned by St. Thomas.
- 11. No coordinating of fundraising** for St. Thomas with fundraising for a candidate, political party, PAC or the like.

PROHIBITED CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

12. No partisan “voter education” activities, such as:

- a. No voter questionnaires** confined to a narrow range of issues or skewed in favor of certain candidates or a political party.
- b. No publishing of candidate ratings**, as the ratings could be viewed as reflecting the views of St. Thomas.
- c. No express or implied endorsement of a candidate for public office** using St. Thomas resources or St. Thomas identifying marks, except as permitted by Section VII of this policy. Examples of prohibited, express endorsement include the placement of signs on St. Thomas property visible to the public that show support for a particular candidate, and publishing statements through St. Thomas email and social media accounts or other communication platforms stating an intention or request to support or oppose a candidate. Examples of implied endorsement are public statements at a St. Thomas meeting or other event by a St. Thomas official, praising a particular candidate in relation to the holding of public office, or a pattern of St. Thomas-sponsored activities in relation to or in support of a particular candidate. As with all of the prohibitions on campaign activities, the prohibition on endorsement applies even if the candidate is a St. Thomas student, faculty or staff member or has another affiliation with St. Thomas, such as a trustee, advisory board or other volunteer position.
- d. No commenting on specific actions, statements or positions taken by candidates, including incumbents, in the course of their campaigns.** St. Thomas is not forbidden to comment on specific issues pertinent to its purposes, particularly if it has a track record of commenting on such issues in non-election years.
- e. No promoting action (voting) with respect to issues that have become highly identified as dividing lines between the candidates.** This principle does not bar St. Thomas from commenting on issues critical to its public purposes, if it has a track record of commenting on such issues in non-election years.
- f. No coordinating legitimate voter education activities with campaign events.**

13. No use of student activity fees or funds raised by student clubs and organizations for campaign activities, regardless of whether a student club or organization is permitted to engage in campaign activities other than campaign fundraising. Student activity fees include funding allocated by St. Thomas student government organizations. Funds raised by student clubs and organizations include, but are not limited to, funds raised through admission to events, fees charged or voluntary contributions by members of the club or organization, donations from third parties, or other means.

14. No establishment of student clubs and organizations solely to support one candidate over another. While St. Thomas may recognize student clubs and organizations that support a particular political party, no student club or organization is permitted to exist simply to support one candidate over another. St. Thomas will not recognize a student club or organization that has as a goal the support of a particular candidate.

15. No display of campaign signs on St. Thomas property, including campus grounds, facilities and virtual classrooms, offices and meeting spaces, including as a virtual background for class or work meetings, other than permitted displays in on-campus residence units as described in Section VIII of the Policy and Section III of this Appendix.

SECTION III. PERMITTED, PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

The table below describes common examples of campaign activities that are permitted to be conducted by St. Thomas faculty, staff, students and volunteers in their personal capacities.

PERMITTED PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

- 1. Registering to vote and voting** in elections in which the individual is an eligible voter. St. Thomas strongly encourages every eligible member of the St. Thomas community to register and vote.
- 2. Making statements expressing personal support for or opposition to particular candidates, political parties, and the like**, so long as (a) you make clear that you are speaking for yourself in your personal capacity and not on behalf of St. Thomas; (b) except for faculty engaged in teaching activities in accordance with Section VIII.E of the policy, you do not use St. Thomas resources (including, but not limited to, St. Thomas email addresses or systems, or St. Thomas social media accounts that St. Thomas utilizes for institutional or unit communications (for example, you may not express views about a candidate on any St. Thomas social media account, in a NewsRoom article or through another St. Thomas account that is associated with a unit rather than a specific person); and (c) faculty, staff, student workers and members of student government organizations whose organizational title or association with St. Thomas is identified in connection with their expressions of personal support must include a statement that their association with St. Thomas is included for identification purposes only, that the individual is speaking or participating for themselves alone, and the University of St. Thomas does not participate in political campaigns on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office. (The more prominent an individual's position with St. Thomas, the greater the risk that their expression may be perceived as support or endorsement by St. Thomas, requiring more care when expressing personal views.)
- 3. Organizing and attending campaign events**, so long as (a) no St. Thomas resources or St. Thomas identifying marks are used in connection with such organization or attendance; and (b) employees do not organize or attend these events during normal work hours unless they have taken approved vacation or leave time.
- 4. Requesting available vacation or other paid or unpaid leave time** if the individual is an employee who wishes to participate in campaign activities during normal work hours.
- 5. Serving as a candidate or holding another formal role in a campaign**, so long as employees who serve as a candidate or hold a formal role in a campaign provide advance written notice to the campaign and St. Thomas that such participation is in the employee's personal capacity and not on behalf of St. Thomas. Depending on the particular office or position, employees who become candidates or hold demanding campaign positions may be required to take leave time to avoid any conflicts of interest or conflicts of commitment with St. Thomas or any perception that the employee is acting on behalf of St. Thomas or using St. Thomas resources or St. Thomas identifying marks in support of the employee's candidacy.
- 6. Contributing money or services to a candidate, campaign, political party or PAC**, so long as the contribution complies with applicable law and does not use St. Thomas resources, work time or St. Thomas identifying marks.
- 7. Displaying campaign signs and other campaign materials at your personal residence that is not owned by St. Thomas or located on the St. Thomas campus.**
- 8. Displaying campaign signs and other campaign materials in personal spaces within campus residences, other than in windows, if you reside on St. Thomas property**, so long as all of your roommates agree to the display if you live in a student residence hall or other student housing.
- 9. Wearing campaign buttons during work hours, meetings or classes.** Students may wear campaign paraphernalia, including buttons, clothing or accessories, without restriction so long as they comply

PERMITTED PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

with any dress code policies that otherwise apply. St. Thomas employees and volunteers who are subject to dress code policies may not wear campaign paraphernalia promoting or opposing candidates on their person during work hours or for St. Thomas events, meetings or classes attended in their capacity as a St. Thomas employee, other than campaign buttons. However, if while wearing a campaign button, the faculty or staff member says, or the context implies, that they are speaking on behalf of St. Thomas, this may raise concerns. Faculty and staff should consider the context and ask whether a person could reasonably perceive the button to imply St. Thomas support of or opposition to the candidate. If so, the faculty or staff member should not wear the button in that context.

10. Displaying campaign stickers and expressions of support or opposition to candidates on personally owned items such as mobile phones, laptops, tablets, cars, bikes, backpacks, briefcases, etc.

Appendix B to Political Activity Policy

FAQs

Date of initial publication: September 3, 2020

Date of latest revision: December 21, 2020

Voting

1. Can St. Thomas share information about how to register and vote with students, employees and others?

Yes, so long as the information is not provided in a way that favors or opposes particular candidates, campaigns or political parties. In fact, St. Thomas, like all U.S. colleges and universities, is required to provide voter registration forms or links to those forms to all of its students.

2. Can I personally encourage students and colleagues to register and vote?

Yes, as long as you are not advocating for or against a particular candidate or issue. St. Thomas values civic engagement, and voting is just one way to engage in the political process. However, if you are a St. Thomas employee in a position of authority over the audience you are encouraging (such as a faculty member talking with your students, or a supervisor talking with individuals in your unit), you must recognize your position of authority and share your encouragement in a way that will not suggest you:

- are directing students or colleagues to register or vote;
- will discriminate or retaliate against a student or colleague based on whether they register or vote;
- are trying to influence students or colleagues to support or oppose a particular candidate, campaign or political party; or
- do not respect your students' or colleagues' freedom to choose for themselves whether to register or vote or how to support or oppose a particular candidate, campaign or political party.

3. Can St. Thomas collaborate with external organizations on voter registration, voter education and get-out-the-vote efforts?

Yes, as long as the external organizations are nonpartisan and the efforts do not tend to favor or oppose particular candidates, campaigns or political parties. Such collaborations must be reviewed in advance by the president's chief of staff or a designee of the chief of staff, to ensure they are appropriately coordinated and do not cross over into prohibited campaign activities.

Academic Freedom: Sharing of Partisan Views in Academic Activities

4. I am a faculty member. Doesn't academic freedom allow me to say whatever I want?

No. Academic freedom is not coextensive with the individual right of free expression protected by the First Amendment. In addition, the First Amendment does not govern private colleges and universities, which can regulate expression consistent with their own organizational missions, values, policies and academic norms.

St. Thomas strongly supports the academic freedom of faculty members, as expressed in the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure. Faculty members have freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, with the caveat that "they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject." They are entitled to "full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution." Finally, faculty members may freely express their views when they speak or write as citizens and "should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution."

Academic freedom does not excuse faculty members from upholding the St. Thomas community standards (the university's mission, convictions, policies and applicable law). Those standards set the expectation that when expressing themselves in connection with their teaching and professional engagement activities, faculty members will maintain professionalism and engage in their St. Thomas responsibilities in ways that advance learning and knowledge consistent with the St. Thomas mission and convictions, by encouraging meaningful discourse that recognizes the power of ideas, rewards rigorous thinking, respects human dignity, supports a vibrant and diverse community that values the unique contributions of each person, and fosters a caring culture that supports the well-being of each person.

5. I am a faculty member. Can I tell students how I voted or which candidates, campaigns or parties I support?

Faculty members can share their voting positions and views with students, but context matters. If you are in class or engaged in an academic activity, your statement should be part of a discussion that is relevant to the class or activity and designed to help advance the learning objectives for students, in a way that is professional, respectful, inclusive and meaningful, rather than for partisan purposes. You must clearly state that the views are your personal views and are not intended to represent the views of St. Thomas. You also must be mindful that you are in a position of authority, and it is important not to leave an impression that you are directing students to take particular action or that you will discriminate or retaliate against them based on your or their views.

6. I am a faculty member. Can I educate students about the political and voting process as part of my class?

Yes, if it is germane to the subject matter of the class.

7. I am a faculty member. Can I tell students where to go to find “good unbiased” information about their voting choices?

You can tell students where you go to find information about voting choices, and how you assess whether the information is unbiased and useful to you.

8. A professor is wearing a button in class for one of the candidates in a local race. Is that okay?

Yes. Faculty, staff and students may express their individual support for candidates, including wearing buttons and stickers on their person and on their belongings. However, if the faculty and staff member says, or if the context implies, that they are speaking on behalf of St. Thomas, this may raise concerns. Faculty and staff should consider the context in which they seek to wear the campaign button and ask whether a person could reasonably interpret the button to appear to imply St. Thomas endorsement of their personal position.

9. As a faculty member, can my department or I organize a conference to discuss ballot proposals or campaign issues, either on- or off-campus?

If the conference is solely educational, it can be held on- or off-campus and can use St. Thomas resources to organize it. If the conference amounts to a campaign event for or against a candidate, political party or ballot initiative, then it cannot be organized by your department, and you cannot use St. Thomas resources for the conference, wherever it is held.

10. As a student or faculty member, may I conduct research on the impact of a ballot or campaign proposal using St. Thomas resources?

Yes. Conducting and reporting on research that is not itself partisan in nature is an integral part of our educational mission; faculty and students may engage in this kind of research.

11. As a student or faculty member, may I post the results of my research on the impact of a ballot or campaign proposal to a St. Thomas website or social media account?

Yes, in the same way students and faculty post similar information on a variety of research and scholarship topics. However, no St. Thomas website or social media account may be used for partisan messages or campaign activities.

Partisan vs. Political Activities

12. The policy discusses nonpartisan political activities. How can political activities be nonpartisan?

Political activities include both partisan and nonpartisan activities. Partisan means the activity favors or opposes a particular candidate, campaign or political party. Nonpartisan means the activity must offer balanced, neutral or impartial viewpoints and perspectives on issues of public concern and not evince a bias for or against a particular candidate, campaign or political party.

Under the policy, campaign activities are always partisan. However, activities that enable participation by all candidates, campaigns or parties on an equal basis, that do not favor any candidate, campaign or party relative to the others, will be considered nonpartisan.

13. I am a faculty member and am permitted to share my personal views with students in my classes. Why can't I hang a political campaign poster in my personal workspace when I see "Dreamers Welcome Here" signs in many offices and reception areas around campus?

St. Thomas is not permitted to engage in campaign activities or to use its resources for campaign activities. Personal workspaces are part of St. Thomas facilities. While individuals can personalize their workspaces to some degree, workspaces are expected to reflect the educational mission and convictions of St. Thomas. Consistent with academic freedom principles, faculty are afforded greater freedom to share their personal views in connection with their teaching responsibilities. They can share personal, partisan views in classes or teaching activities when sharing the information is consistent with learning objectives and can be presented in an educational context. Hanging a poster in a workspace is missing the educational context and may give the impression that by allowing the poster to be displayed, St. Thomas supports the faculty member's view.

"Dreamers Welcome Here" signs refer to students who arrived in the United States as children, without fulfilling all the legal requirements to become legal immigrants. Whether or not these students should be able to remain in the United States with opportunities for a legal path to citizenship is a matter of public concern. St. Thomas is permitted to take positions on matters of public concern if consistent with its mission and institutional interests. St. Thomas has a history of speaking out in support of Dreamers and public policies that provide Dreamers with legal opportunities to remain in the United States. Posting "Dreamers Welcome Here" signs is a form of issue advocacy that St. Thomas is permitted to conduct, and it has actively advocated in support of Dreamers. Issue advocacy generally is not considered to be a partisan campaign activity if it is part of an ongoing series of communications on the same issue made independently of the timing of any election, without regard to any particular candidates or their positions or actions.

Personal Involvement in Campaign Activities

14. Can I put up a campaign poster on my St. Thomas office door or on the walls of my St. Thomas office or workspace?

No. Campaign posters, stickers and buttons may not be posted on St. Thomas office doors or on the walls of offices or cubicles. St. Thomas maintains a nonpartisan atmosphere on campus consistent with IRS guidelines for nonprofit institutions. Affixing the sign, sticker or button to a St. Thomas facility uses institutional resources to promote or oppose candidates. You may wear buttons or place stickers on your person or your personal belongings, such as a briefcase or personally owned laptop or cellphone that you bring to your office.

15. May I use my personal social media account to tweet or post my personal political views?

If you are a St. Thomas employee who primarily or regularly uses your social media account in your professional St. Thomas role, you should avoid sharing your personal political views on the account. If you do share your views, you must clarify that it is your personal view and not related to St. Thomas. If you have a personal account that you do not use in your professional St. Thomas role, you can share your views on that account without restriction.

16. May I be listed as a supporter of a candidate with my St. Thomas title and university association listed alongside my name?

It is fine for your name to be listed, as long as it is not in a St. Thomas publication or submitted using St. Thomas email or other St. Thomas resources. If your St. Thomas title and association are included, a statement must be included that your association with St. Thomas is included for identification purposes only, that the individual is speaking or participating for themselves alone, and the University of

St. Thomas does not participate in political campaigns on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.

17. May I sign a letter to the editor or other communication on an election issue with my name and St. Thomas association?

You can always send a letter to the editor using your name. As a general matter, it is inappropriate in a non-work-related setting to state or imply that you represent St. Thomas, and identifying your association with St. Thomas may have that effect. One way to avoid even an implication that you are writing on behalf of St. Thomas is not to include your association. However, many media outlets may choose to identify your university association even if you do not include it with your letter. You should ask the outlet what their practice is to make sure they will not include it. Alternatively, you should include a disclaimer that your title or position is given for identification purposes only and does not indicate St. Thomas support for or endorsement of the views you are advocating. If you are a senior leader of St. Thomas, or a faculty or staff member who is publicly visible, or you are a student government leader, you should always include a disclaimer that the views expressed are your personal views and are not intended to represent the views of St. Thomas.

18. I am a St. Thomas employee. May I use my St. Thomas email account to send and receive messages that support or oppose particular candidates, as long as I am clear I am not acting on behalf of St. Thomas in doing so?

No. Employees cannot use any St. Thomas resources or St. Thomas identifying marks, including the St. Thomas email system and email addresses, to support particular candidates.

19. I am a St. Thomas employee. In my personal time and using personal email accounts, I am active in various campaign activities. May I send copies of my campaign-related emails from my personal email account to my St. Thomas account?

No. Employees cannot use any St. Thomas resources or St. Thomas identifying marks, including the St. Thomas email system and email addresses, for campaign activities.

20. Can I hold fundraising events for particular candidate or ballot initiatives on campus?

No. Fundraising for candidates and ballot initiatives is not permitted on campus.

21. I plan to hold a campaign fundraising event at my personal residence. Can I invite St. Thomas colleagues who I know to support the candidate?

You can invite colleagues as long as you use a non-St. Thomas email or home address (for you and them) and do not use your or their St. Thomas email or work address or other St. Thomas communication platforms to share the invitation. Sending to a St. Thomas email address or distribution list is prohibited.

22. Can I distribute campaign buttons to students or colleagues?

St. Thomas employees (faculty, staff and student workers) generally cannot distribute campaign buttons or literature during regular work hours on St. Thomas premises. If a colleague sees your campaign button and expresses interest in obtaining one, and you have an extra, you can give it to them outside of regular work hours in a small group setting. Similarly, students may offer campaign buttons to friends in small group settings, but campaign buttons may not be publicly distributed on campus other than in accordance with the student club and organization rules related to campaign activities.

23. I am a St. Thomas alum and I am running for political office. May I describe myself as “the St. Thomas candidate” in my campaign messages?

No. Using the St. Thomas name, logos or trademarked phrases would inaccurately suggest university endorsement of your candidacy. However, you may make statements about your affiliation with St. Thomas, such as, “I graduated from the University of St. Thomas in 2018,” or “I am a proud alum of the University of St. Thomas.”

24. I’m going to a campaign rally. Can I wear my St. Thomas sweatshirt?

Yes. Wearing clothing with St. Thomas logos, during your personal time does not suggest support by the university, as many people wear such clothing who are not employed by St. Thomas.

25. Can I put up a campaign yard sign on campus?

No. Yard signs are prohibited on St. Thomas grounds.

26. Can I slip candidate campaign literature under residence hall room doors?

No. However, you can display the literature within your room in your residence hall (other than in your windows, and you can use a personal, non-St. Thomas email address to contact friends using their personal, non-St. Thomas email address to know it is available if they would like to stop by and pick it up. Also, certain canvassing activity is allowed in residence halls by candidates under Minnesota law.

27. Can I promote a candidate with a sidewalk chalk message?

No. St. Thomas maintains a nonpartisan atmosphere on campus consistent with IRS guidelines for nonprofit institutions.

28. I plan to run for the local school board and I’m a St. Thomas employee. Do I need to do anything?

Yes. Faculty, staff and student workers who plan to run for an elective public office must disclose their campaign and obtain approval for their outside activities in accordance with the university’s outside employment and conflict of interest policies. The disclosures must be made before you initiate the outside activity.

29. Do these campaign guidelines apply to me if I am not a U.S. citizen?

Yes, these guidelines apply to you, regardless of your citizenship. However, as a non-citizen, there are additional limitations that apply to your personal campaign-related activities. More information about those limitations is available from the Federal Election Commission website ([linked here](#)).

Events Discussing Political and Campaign Issues

30. I’m a staff member planning an on-campus, St. Thomas-funded event that will discuss a proposal that is on the ballot in next week’s election. Is there anything I can do to make it clearer that my event is intended to be educational in nature?

The timing of an event close to an election may increase the possibility that the event will be misperceived as intending to influence the outcome of that election. If you are concerned that your event might be misconstrued as an endorsement of or opposition to the ballot proposal, you may want to consider how you will describe the event in advertisements and other program materials so that you can emphasize its educational focus. You can always contact the Office of General Counsel if you have

questions about how to proceed, and you are encouraged to do so as early in the planning process as possible.

31. I have been invited as a panelist to discuss a campaign issue; may I participate?

Yes, as long as you make it clear that you are sharing your personal views and are not representing the views of St. Thomas. If you include this disclaimer, your St. Thomas affiliation can be shared purely for identification purposes.

32. May external individuals and organizations hold campaign-related events in St. Thomas facilities?

St. Thomas can host and sponsor, or license its facilities for use by third parties, for nonpartisan events that give all sides equal opportunity for equal access, and that do not favor or oppose any particular candidate, campaign or political party. St. Thomas has chosen not to allow third parties to use its facilities for partisan campaign-related events, in order to help maintain a nonpartisan environment on campus.

33. I heard an interview on St. Thomas student radio station (WUST) with a guest who was voicing a strong opinion about a ballot initiative. Are university-owned media allowed to publish or broadcast interviews about campaign topics?

Yes. Applicable law clearly recognizes the rights of the recognized student media outlets to do all of the things the media outlet typically does in an election year, including interview candidates, host debates and call-in shows, provide commentary, publish op/ed pieces, and report news stories on the election, so long as St. Thomas faculty and staff do not control the editorial content.

34. I saw an announcement for an on-campus, St. Thomas-sponsored event discussing the platforms of the candidates in the upcoming election. I completely disagree with one of the speaker's political views. Isn't this event obviously in violation of IRS rules? How can I stop the event?

St. Thomas-sponsored events that discuss political candidates, or that feature speakers with known political views, are permitted and commonly held at nonprofit universities, so long as they are designed to be educational and do not favor one candidate over another.

Some members of the St. Thomas community will undoubtedly disagree with certain invited speakers, while other community members might agree with those speakers and disagree with others who are invited to speak. If you disagree with an invited speaker, you have many options to express your disagreement, but stopping the event or disinviting the speaker generally will not be an option. Instead, you might consider attending the event and sharing your concerns during times in which the speaker is interacting with the audience, or organizing another event that would provide an opportunity to share other viewpoints on the subject.

35. There will be a candidate event downtown next week, sponsored by a different organization. Can I send out an email to spread the word?

Not with your St. Thomas email account or using other employees' St. Thomas email addresses. St. Thomas resources and identifying marks, including email systems and addresses, may not be used to promote a candidate. You may send an email from your personal email account to individuals whose personal email addresses you know. Sending to a St. Thomas email address or distribution list is prohibited.

Lobbying

36. I'm a student. Is it okay for me to ask other students to contact legislators to support proposed legislation that matters to me?

This would be considered grassroots lobbying of your peers. Students can engage in grassroots lobbying, but you can't use St. Thomas email addresses, directories or other communication platforms to do so unless you have permission from the president's chief of staff or designees of the chief of staff. Usually, St. Thomas permits lobbying to be conducted with St. Thomas resources only if the lobbying is organized by an authorized St. Thomas unit, such as the Center for the Common Good or the Racial Justice Initiative.

37. I'm a faculty member. Can I suggest, but not require, students in my class to contact legislators to support proposed legislation that matters to me?

No. This would be considered grassroots lobbying of your students. Using your St. Thomas faculty relationship to lobby your students to advance legislation you personally support is not an appropriate use of St. Thomas resources.

If you mention legislation you support in class or a personal conversation with the student, without seeking to influence students to support the legislation, and the student asks you for more information so they can contact legislators, you may provide the requested information.

38. I'm a staff member. If there is a ballot initiative that would benefit St. Thomas, can I host a meeting to tell people about the initiative or post something on the OneStThomas site for my unit asking people to vote for the initiative?

No, not unless you have prior written permission from the president, the president's chief of staff or a designee of the chief of staff. St. Thomas must ensure any lobbying on its behalf is consistent with its mission and complies with any applicable registration and reporting requirements.