
SUBJECT:	Partisan Political Activity
REVIEWED/REVISED:	9/2015; 2/2022
PURPOSE:	Provide guidance on engagement in political activity
POLICY OWNER:	Vice President, Institutional Effectiveness

POLICY:

Nebraska Methodist College ("NMC" or "College"), as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, is prohibited from participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. Political intervention includes not only making financial contributions but also the publication or distribution of written or oral statements on behalf of or in opposition to a particular candidate. There are no exceptions to this prohibition. Even an insubstantial violation may lead to monetary fines and exposes NMC to the possibility of revocation of its tax-exempt status.

Nonetheless, NMC is dedicated to the free expression of ideas. It encourages students, faculty, and other employees, in their individual capacities, to participate fully in the political process during campaigns by candidates for public office as long as they do not either overtly or implicitly involve the College.

In order to permit the most robust political discourse during partisan political campaigns for public office, while at the same time ensuring NMC's compliance with state and federal law, including the applicable restrictions placed on it as a tax-exempt organization, everyone connected with NMC must observe the following rules with respect to his or her participation in national, state, or local partisan political campaign activities:

1. When endorsing or opposing a candidate for political office or taking a position on an issue for the purpose of assisting or opposing a candidate, individuals and groups within the College should undertake to make it clear that they are speaking only for themselves and that they are not stating a College position. This is particularly important for those who in their official capacity frequently speak for the College.
2. Faculty and other employees may take part in partisan political activities freely on their own time, but they must not do so at the expense of their regular responsibilities to the College and its students.
3. NMC's name or insignia cannot be used on stationery or other documents intended for political purposes, including soliciting funds for political support or carrying on a political campaign.
4. Funds or other contributions may not be solicited in the name of Nebraska Methodist College for political support or carrying on a political campaign.

5. NMC employees may not - and should not - be asked to perform tasks related to partisan political activities during working hours.
6. The following may not under any circumstances be used for political campaign purposes:
 - College bulk mailing privilege and mailing lists-including the addresses and e-mail addresses of departmental offices or the offices of faculty or other employees;
 - College blogs and social media accounts;
 - College-provided office supplies, telephones, facsimile machines, copiers, etc.;
 - The College's sales tax exemption for purchases of goods and services.
7. Any communication disseminated through the NMC e-mail, blogs or social media that could be construed as relating to political activity must include a clear statement that such communication represents the personal position of the author.
8. College-related organizations comprised solely of members of the College community may utilize available College building space (College facilities regularly reserved for student use and other College space such as lecture halls and meeting rooms) to engage in partisan political campaign activities within the College community, provided that such organizations pay for the costs of such activities (typically, telephones, duplicating, electricity, etc.). A disclaimer should be made at the beginning of any such event (and in any printed materials or advertising) that the College does not support or oppose candidates for political office, that the opinions expressed are not those of the College, and that the College-related organization has sponsored the event. All plans, publicity, and other information relating to such activities must be approved in advance by NMC's Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Methodist Health System's Vice President of Compliance. The College's outdoor grounds may not be used for partisan political events.
9. Organizations that are comprised of non-College members, participants or employees, in whole or in part, are ineligible for use of College space to engage in partisan political campaign activities.
10. Certain nonpartisan political activities (such as properly organized voter registration activities, voter education programs, and candidate debates) may be permissible if they do not evidence a preference for or opposition to a political party or to candidates who have taken a particular position. In order to ensure that all legal and College requirements are followed, advance approval for these events must be obtained from (and all materials must be reviewed by) both NMC's Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Methodist Health System's Vice President of Compliance. In addition, an announcement should be made at the beginning of each such event and in any written materials setting forth the disclaimer described in paragraph 8 above.

As noted above, these policies are not intended to infringe in any way your individual right to support a particular candidate or participate in a political campaign. You remain entirely free to become involved in the election process as you choose, so long as you do so in a way that does not either overtly or impliedly involve the College.

*Note, however, that when such College-related organizations engage in partisan political campaign activities aimed outside the College community, they may not utilize College space for such activities, but instead must conduct all such activities off campus.