



# Political ~~Electioneering and Legislative~~ Activities Policy

## Revised Draft

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Category: Administration

Name of Responsible Offices: ~~President's Office~~ Community Relations; and Office of the Provost and Vice President, Academic and Student Affairs

Title of Responsible Executives: ~~Chief of Staff~~ Vice President, Institutional Advancement and Executive Director, MCC Foundation; and Provost and Vice President, Academic and Student Affairs

Date Established:

Date Last Approved:

## Policy Statement

This document covers the Monroe Community College policy on political ~~electioneering and legislative~~ activities, including invitations and candidate appearances; participation in the electoral process by faculty, staff, and students; and use of institutional resources. ~~and prohibited activities.~~

## Policy

### *Invitations and Candidate Appearances*

Public higher education institutions may invite political candidates to speak at events or public forums as long as all candidates are provided equal access and opportunities to speak. Public higher education institutions are prohibited from institutionally endorsing a particular candidate. In addition, campaign fundraising at MCC events and forums is prohibited. Political candidates can be invited to speak at college-sponsored events for purposes unrelated to their campaign, but in such situations, they will be prohibited from actively campaigning or referring to a current/forthcoming election.

To provide proper reception, observe appropriate protocols, and ensure adequate facilities and safety issues are addressed, invitations to elected or appointed officials or those seeking election should only be extended after consultation with the MCC Office of the President. Anyone seeking to extend such an invitation should contact the [Office of the President \(presoffice@monroecc.edu\)](mailto:presoffice@monroecc.edu) or 585-292-2100 and the [Office of Government Relations \(vnd-apazminogovernmentaffairs@monroecc.edu\)](mailto:vnd-apazminogovernmentaffairs@monroecc.edu) as soon as practicable and, if possible, not less than three weeks (not including holidays) prior to such invitation.

All members of the college community are expected to conduct themselves respectfully during political discussions and candidate appearances.

### *Participation in the Electoral Process by Faculty, Staff, and Students*

Curricular activities aimed at educating students about the political process (e.g., allowing students as part of a class to participate in political campaign activities) are permitted provided the college does not influence student choices and that the activities adhere to the Freedom of Expression Policies of MCC. In general,

members of the college community (staff, faculty, students, etc.) are entitled to participate individually in political discourse, including on their personal social media accounts, provided they do not speak or act in the name of the institution and do not use MCC resources (e.g., computer, printing, email, etc.), and do not use college logos or name the institution in a partisan context. Employees should refrain from using their official titles when promoting a candidate on their personal time.

### Voter education activities

Public higher education institutions are permitted to conduct voter education activities as long as they are carried out in a non-partisan manner. Permitted activities include non-partisan voter registration activities, circulation of questionnaires to candidates for an office (provided the questionnaires cover a broad range of subjects and do not express an editorial opinion, such as push polls), and training programs designed to increase understanding of and participation in the electoral process.

### Voter registration activities

Public higher education institutions~~Recognized student organizations~~ may organize or participate in voter registration activities subject to the requirements of the Monroe County Board of Elections and NY State Election Law. Voter registration activities must be non-partisan. The Office of Student Life and Leadership Development can provide assistance for student organizations interested in conducting voter registration drives on campus. Voter registration activities should not include the presence of a candidate for office.

### Facilities

With appropriate organization sponsorship and/or faculty/staff supervision, the use of MCC classrooms or other campus facilities for political discussion or debate outside of teaching and learning as part of an actual class activity is permissible under certain circumstances (see Invitations and Candidate Appearances). Prospective sponsors seeking to use a space at Monroe Community College must complete and submit the application form. This form is for both MCC and Non-MCC event organizations requesting event space. The organizer or their designee must submit a completed Campus Events application to review venue availability and related college policies/procedures. Applicants must submit the Campus Event application form to begin the process of reserving the appropriate space on campus. All relevant units of the college will strive to accommodate the necessary planning in a timely fashion.

### *Use of Institutional Resources*

Acceptable uses of college resources (e.g., college email accounts, office supplies, college-issued electronic devices) for political ~~and legislative~~ activities include:

1. Establishing genuine curricular activities that support the mission of MCC and established College policies, including the Academic Freedom Policy and the Freedom of Expression Policy.
2. Adjusting the academic calendar to allow students to participate in the political process (if it does not favor a campaign or issue).
3. Allowing recognized/chartered student groups the use of institutional facilities for political purposes, provided the student groups follow all Student Life and Leadership policies, rules, and regulations.

Internal communications must be used to alert the MCC community to events sponsored by student groups or rentals taking place on MCC property. Such communications must clearly identify the sponsoring organization and explicitly state that the college does not endorse any political candidates.

Student(s) or student organizations may not use Monroe Community College's name, seal, or mark in any communication, including canvassing, letters, websites, emails, etc. without proper approvals identified in the Temporary Signage Protocol.

Student magazines or newspapers have the right to print editorials/opinion pieces conveying the opinions of their editors and/or staff about candidates provided there is a clear disclaimer on the editorial page stating that the expressed views belong to the student writers and do not represent the college's stance.

### ***Confidentiality***

Faculty, staff, and students are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding college resources and information.

### ***Prohibited Activities***

Certain activities are expressly prohibited under this policy, as summarized in the subsections below:

1. Attempts on the part of the college to influence an individual's personal political affiliation or actively communicate (implicitly or otherwise) that a given political affiliation is expected, desired, or is to be avoided by students, faculty, staff, or other participants is prohibited.
2. College property, offices, meetings or classrooms, and auditoriums and grounds shall not be used ~~for political activities, to endorse or promote a candidate for public office (electioneering), including to solicit funds for political support campaign fundraising activities, or to carry on a political campaign for public office.~~ (This guideline shall not be interpreted to prevent the use of college facilities for legitimate educational programs on political topics that are consistent with College policies, including the Academic Freedom Policy and the Freedom of Expression Policy). ~~so long as the program is viewpoint neutral or opposing viewpoints are fairly represented and are reasonably viewed as non-partisan.~~ If any college employee wishes to ensure that all requirements are followed, ~~they or she~~ should consult Community Relations with the Responsible Office.
3. Faculty and staff members shall not use regularly scheduled College work time for personal or partisan political activities.
4. Extending invitations to elected officials and/or candidates running for any public office, canceling or moving classes for activities without the proper authorization or approval, are also prohibited.
- 4.5. Canceling or moving classes for activities to favor a particular candidate are prohibited (e.g., canceling class or incentivizing students who attend one candidate's event but not others).

### ***Background***

Monroe Community College's (MCC) procedures are based on state law, IRS rulings under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and the Federal Election Campaign Act. There is a delicate balance between maintaining the legal status of the college as a tax-exempt institution and the mission for which it is chartered. The penalties associated with improper political activity by a college or university are quite severe and can include loss of the institution's tax-exempt status and state or federal lawsuits, audits, or investigations.

## Applicability

This policy is applicable to any individual or group of faculty, staff, students, and visitors seeking involvement of political and ~~electioneering~~ legislative activities on Monroe Community College property or at college sponsored events.

~~The responsible office~~ Community Relations will oversee this policy. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, such as suspension of privileges or employment termination.

## Definitions

- **College:** Monroe Community College.
- **College Property:** any land, building, or other property that is owned, leased, or under the control of Monroe Community College.
- **Organization:** recognized student government groups or clubs and/or athletic teams.

## Related Information

- [1.1 Academic Freedom Policy](#)
- 2.7 Freedom of Expression Policy
- [Campus Events Application](#)
- Student Life & Leadership Development Policy Manual
- Temporary Signage Protocol