



## Executive Summary of Feedback Received from the Policy Portal to the Political and Legislative Activities Policy

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During the comment period for the Political and Legislative Activities Policy, multiple people submitted comments/questions, which are addressed below:

**Comment #1:** Multiple individuals noted the importance of defining “political activities” to add clarity on what is prohibited by the policy. For example, one submission explained, “Without a definition of political activities, this implies a broad range of prohibited activities unrelated to campaigns. Political is very broad, and thus political activities can be understood broadly.”

**Administrative Response # 1:** The intent of this policy is to address the invitation of elected officials or candidates for public office to campus and faculty, staff, and student participation in the electoral process. To clarify that, we have made multiple edits to the policy to add clarity, including the use of “political electioneering” instead of “political activities” and incorporated the use of more precise language in the prohibited activities section.

**Comment #2:** Multiple individuals raised concerns related to academic freedom and First Amendment rights. For example, “While the policy mentioned faculty and staff can participate in political discourse on personal time, it does not specifically address the right of professors to engage in political discussions within the classroom as part of their academic duties, without the risk of violating the policy.”

**Administrative Response #2:** We affirm our commitment to academic freedom and First Amendment rights as outlined in the Academic Freedom Policy and the Freedom of Expression Policy and Procedure. The policy notes the acceptable use of college resources for “genuine curricular activities.” For clarity, we added references to the Academic Freedom Policy and the Freedom of Expression Policy to the Use of Institutional Resources, Prohibited Activities, and the Related Information sections of the policy.

**Comment #3:** One individual asked a specific question related to academic freedom canceling class: “Suppose another campus organization is hosting a speaker on a policy issue at the same time my class meetings, and the issue squarely fits into my curriculum and course learning outcomes. Do I have to seek approval to take my class to this event?”

**Administrative Response # 3:** Class cancellations should follow the existing class cancellation process. Furthermore, we edited the prohibited activities section for clarity: “Canceling or moving classes for activities to favor a particular candidate is prohibited (e.g., cancelling class or incentivizing students who attend one candidate’s event but not others).”

**Comment #4:** One individual raised the concern that “The policy does not explicitly address the role of the college curriculum in fostering political literacy, critical thinking, and civic responsibility.”

**Administrative Response #4:** The policy lists “genuine curricular activities” in the acceptable use of college resource section, but does not seek to define college curriculum. We added reference to the Academic Freedom Policy to this section for clarity.

**Comment #5:** One individual noted, “I think including the email for the Office of Government Relations, because it is a specific individual, is inappropriate here as it will not necessarily be accurate for the next few years of this policy.”

**Administrative Response #5:** We agree that it is more appropriate to offer a general email address for this office and have made that edit.

**Comment #6:** One individual asked, “Under ‘vote education activities,’ who will ensure questionnaires to candidates for office will cover a broad range of subjects and do not express an editorial opinion?”

**Administrative Response #6:** It is the responsibility of all members of the college community to follow this policy. As the responsible office, Community Relations will oversee this policy.

**Comment #7:** One individual asked if non-student organizations are allowed to host voter registration drives or non-prohibited political activities.

**Administrative Response #7:** We edited the “Voter registration activities” section, replacing “Recognized student organizations” with “Public higher education institutions” to match the language in the “Voter education activities” section.

**Comment #8:** One individual noted “I am uncomfortable with the vague and seemingly open opportunity to overtly influence people who think differently.”

**Administrative Response #8:** The focus of this policy is to provide guidelines for candidate appearances and the participation of faculty, staff, and students in the electoral process consistent with the College’s mission and legal status as a public tax-exempt institution. As a public institution, MCC has both opportunities and obligations for encouraging civic engagement and the open exchange of ideas. We added multiple references to the Freedom of Expression Policy throughout the document, underscoring the College’s fundamental role as a center for open inquiry and the search for knowledge, grounded in its commitment to the First Amendment.

**Comment #9:** Another response raised concerns about the impact of this policy on the exchange of ideas in the classroom: “This particular document is particularly concerning. College is a time of discovery for our students, a time for them to develop an understanding of the world, and ultimately their place and ideologies within it. I look back on my own time as college as eye-opening, particularly a particular Race/Gender/Class course where Dr. J challenged us to look within to understand our biases and we had some tough discourse on difficult topics, many of which could be under an umbrella of “political topics.” These classes broadened my perspectives, allowed me to truly hear others’ experiences, and ultimately shaped the man I am today. Who decides what a political topic is? What is viewpoint neutral? What are the standards and evaluation of these key words? In my journalism class, we discuss many news stories that happen to have politics as key angles, so to say we’re not allowed to discuss how journalists cover/pursue those stories, or how to do journalism when journalistic freedoms are in peril, runs counter to those classes. Over the past 5 to 6 years, I’ve implemented weekly “Jam Sessions” into

these where students get to choose the topic and then we riff on those, by utilizing the communication skills, having healthy dialogue, active listening, understanding, and respecting. Some of these topics range from Anime and video games to abortion and voting rights. Students have reported that the jam sessions are their favorite part of the class, but with the above policy, I'm concerned that even though I mediate an open dialogue about all topics, and we model the assertive/non-defensive skills, some of these conversations could violate the policy. I believe these conversations not only give students a safe place to share their feelings/views, one that isn't the polarized social media sphere, but also allows them to truly listen to differing viewpoints. This IS part of that collegiate discovery. This policy, as written, violates academic freedom. It violates what's at the core of freedom of expression. It violates the very essence of college. This opens the door to only teaching curriculum that is approved by certain federal agencies, you know what most authoritarian regimes dream of, with that level of control. Please reconsider and clarify this before it becomes policy!"

**Administrative Response #9:** We affirm our commitment to academic freedom and the College's role as a center for open inquiry and the search for knowledge. The policy notes the acceptable use of college resources for "genuine curricular activities." For clarity, we added references to the Academic Freedom Policy to the Use of Institutional Resources, Prohibited Activities, and the Related Information sections of the policy.