

# Stanford

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## Political Activities Policy

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Stanford University supports the expression and discussion of ideas and opinions and encourages members of the University community to be informed and engaged citizens. At the same time, however, Stanford is subject to federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding political activities such as campaign activities, lobbying, and the giving of gifts to public officials. This results in part because of the University's status as a non-profit 501(c)(3) entity.

These laws and regulations limit the political activities (such as supporting or opposing a particular candidate for election) that can take place in Stanford facilities or on Stanford land or with Stanford support. For this reason, any political activities on the Stanford campus must be consistent with [Administrative Guide Memo 1.5.1](#) [1].

These policies also apply to all virtual events, webinars and symposia using varied software technologies.

These limitations in no way inhibit the expression of personal political views by any individual within the University community.

Because the laws relating to political activities are complex, all University schools, departments and institutes wishing to engage in such activities should consult with the Office of Special Events & Protocol, which will consult in turn with other University offices, as appropriate. For additional information on particular political activities, see, [?Election Season Reminder ? Guidelines for Political Activities? Memo](#) [2].

One particular area to note involves proposed speeches by candidates on campus. Before inviting candidates (those who are current officeholders and/or who are candidates for an election) as speakers for a campus event, University schools, departments, and institutes must first obtain prior approval from the Office of Special Events and Protocol. Registered student groups must first meet with an advisor from the Office of Student Engagement, which will likewise consult with the Office of Special Events & Protocol. During campaign periods, further procedural approvals may be necessary to proceed.

Speeches by political candidates must be made in a non-candidate capacity as a person giving a lecture or otherwise involved in an academic discussion, and are limited to topics involving policy issues or subject matters of interest to students or the broader University community. These may not be campaign events, and must maintain a non-partisan atmosphere. The speaker must avoid referring to his or her campaign or candidacy (including in any written announcements, publications or written handouts related to the event), may not advocate the election or defeat of any clearly identified candidate or ballot measure, may not solicit campaign contributions before, during or after the event, and there will be no display of campaign signage in connection with the event. The event should not encourage support for or opposition to a specific political party. Candidates or their representative are required to sign a specific agreement in advance certifying to this. Contact the Office of Special Events & Protocol for further information about this process.

Non-Stanford entities are prohibited from inviting media to the Stanford University campus for any events. Stanford schools, departments, institutes, and student organizations interested in press/media participation must work with University Communications and adhere to university press/media policies. The University will have sole responsibility for deciding whether the press/media will be invited to the event and will handle any such invitations.

## Prohibited political activities include:

- Using University facilities or receiving University support, except as provided in Administrative Guide Memo 1.5.1.
- Using Stanford name and seal, on-campus addresses, and nonresidential telephones, resources, services, equipment, supplies, meeting rooms, email lists, or personnel (including research assistants).
- Using a Stanford school, department, or institute's name to endorse a candidate while using University resources.
- Using Stanford school, department, or institutes? name on a candidate?s campaign website or collateral materials to endorse a candidate.
- Recruiting volunteers for campaign activities during events.
- On-campus solicitation of campaign contributions for candidates.
- Payment of fees to candidates.

For further information about prohibited and permissible activities please see [Administrative Guide Memo 1.5.1](#) [1] or contact the Office of Special Events & Protocol. For student matters, please also see the [Office of Student Engagement Policy](#). [3]

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**Source URL:** <https://osep.stanford.edu/policies/political-activities-policy>

### Links

[1] <https://adminguide.stanford.edu/chapter-1/subchapter-5/policy-1-5-1>

[2] [https://osep.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj1691/f/political\\_activity\\_memo\\_9.24.20\\_0.pdf](https://osep.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj1691/f/political_activity_memo_9.24.20_0.pdf)

[3] <https://ose.stanford.edu/policies/political-activities>