Policy on Campus Political Activity

INTRODUCTION
Recognizing our commitment to produce active citizens engaged in a full civic life, Widener seeks to reverse the trend towards civic apathy among American youth by encouraging participation in the political life of the community and exposing the campus to people whose call to public service creates a better world for us all.

At the same time, as a non-profit, private institution of higher education whose activities are regulated in part by Section 501C3 of the Internal Revenue Code, Widener University is prohibited from participating or intervening in any political campaign of a candidate for public office.

For those reasons, political activities on campus must be conducted in a neutral and nonpartisan manner, and in furtherance of Widener’s legitimate exempt function as an institution of higher education.

GENERAL
Political activity on campus must essentially support an educational purpose and not be used primarily as a call to action for a particular candidate.
A single instance of a particular activity that is inconsequential in nature may not amount to a violation of the Internal Revenue Code. However, if activities in combination appear to support one candidate or suggest measurable institutional involvement in a campaign, then a violation of the tax code is likely to be found.

GUIDEPOSTS
The following are to be used as guideposts on political activity on campus:

Presentations
Students, faculty and staff are free to express their individual and collective political views provided they understand and make clear they are not speaking for, or in the name of, Widener University. However, endorsement of a particular candidate by an officially constituted campus group is not permissible. The university name and insignia may not appear on stationery or any other material used or intended to a particular candidate.

Candidates and Campaigning
An appearance by a candidate for public office on campus must be for an educational or informational talk to the university community and must be sponsored by an officially constituted campus organization. Appearances must be coordinated with the Office of the
President to ensure that opportunities to appear on campus are extended to all viable candidates running for a particular office. The event should not be conducted as a campaign rally, and the moderator should make it clear that Widener University does not support or oppose the candidate. Candidate campaigning and fundraising, including the transmission of campaign materials over the Internet, is not allowed anywhere on university property without university permission. Posters and leaflets must be in accord with the Widener University policy for posting notices on campus.

Use of University Facilities and Resources
No campus political activities, including services and materials, may be paid for with university funds. The use of facilities and resources is subject to university scheduling policy. Campus organizations may use campus communications to announce political forums and discussions sponsored by officially constituted campus groups as long as the focus is on educational opportunities rather than recruitment of campaign workers. However, campus communications, including Widener’s campus mail system, phone system, or its computer network, should not be used to further the campaign of any one candidate. In general, university facilities and resources must not be used primarily as a call to action for a particular candidate.

Fundraising
Funds or contributions for political candidates or campaigns may not under any circumstances be solicited in the name of Widener University or on campus, and university resources may not be used in soliciting such funds. If Widener University students, faculty, or staff make political contributions, they must do so as individuals and not on behalf of Widener University.

Posting Flyers
Posters, signs, notices, and flyers may be posted on designated sites on campus. All materials must bear the official Widener University stamp before being posted for a specific event or program.