

**1.I-2023: Partisan Political Activities Policy**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to protect the non-partisan status of the University and to set out the University’s expectations on Partisan Political Activities as it applies to Appointees, Employees, and Students of the University. This policy is not intended to limit or interfere with academic freedom and does not preclude any member of the University Community from engaging with political parties, their candidates or other political party representatives in conducting research, knowledge mobilization, and teaching, or as private citizens.

**2. Definitions**

- 2.1 **“Appointee”** means an individual who is engaged to work for the University, or whose work is affiliated with the University, through a letter of appointment, including adjunct faculty, sessionals, and visiting researchers and scholars.
- 2.2 **“Employee”** means an individual who is engaged to work for the University under an employment contract.
- 2.3 **“Partisan Political Activity”** means action that supports or opposes a political party, candidate, or other electoral activities in any jurisdiction, including:
- i. seeking nomination as or being a candidate for election;
  - ii. volunteering for a political party, candidate, or elected official;
  - iii. soliciting Political Donations or fundraising; and
  - iv. soliciting nomination signatures.

It does not include action, such as knowledge mobilization, research engagement, and teaching, or lobbying on behalf of the University, which may be within an Employee’s scope of employment.

Approval Authority	Responsible Office	Effective Date	Date Last Revisited
Board of Governors	G&N Committee of the Board of Governors	June 23, 2023	

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- 2.4 **“Political Donations”** means the contribution of funds (including cash, cheques, purchase orders, p-cards/credit card purchases, and funding requests made to accounts payable), work time, services provided in kind, gifts (including door prizes and silent auction gifts), or resources to a Partisan Political Activity, a political party, a candidate for elected office, referendum campaign.
- 2.5 **“Political Office”** means an elected role in government, in any jurisdiction.
- 2.6 **“Student”** means an individual registered in a University course or program of study.
- 2.7 **“Student Club”** means a registered SA club.
- 2.8 **“SA”** means The Students’ Association, St. Mary’s University.
- 2.9 **“University”** means St. Mary’s University
- 2.10 **“University Community”** means all Appointees, Employees, and Students.
- 2.11 **“University Controlled Digital Channels”** means electronic means of communicating operated by the University, including University-branded or operated software tools and applications, digital images and display boards, digital audio and video, digital advertising, web pages and websites, social media, data and databases, email marketing, and electronic books.
- 2.12 **“University Resources”** means the tangible and intangible assets of the University, including funds, electronic and IT communications, University Controlled Digital Channels, computers, cellular phones or other communication devices, mail lists, stationery, and any other equipment or resource provided by the University. The university will not allow any political party or individual candidate signs on university property.

### 3. Policy Statement

- 3.1 The University is a non-partisan organization and does not support or endorse any political party, candidate, or referendum question at any level of government.

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- 3.2 The University recognizes the rights of Students to participate in Partisan Political Activities provided they do not use University Resources to do so.
- 3.3 The University recognizes the right of Appointees and Employees to participate in Partisan Political Activities provided they do not use University Resources to do so, and they continue to fulfil their responsibilities to the University. Appointees and Employees participating in Partisan Political Activities for academic, research, knowledge mobilization, or teaching purposes, or as private citizens, will not do so in such a manner that a reasonable person would infer that they are representing the position of the University.
- 3.4 Appointees, Employees, Students and Student Clubs may use University facilities for Partisan Political Activities provided they comply with the Use of University Facilities for Non-Academic Purposes Policy and the University is not subsidizing the cost of this use.
- 3.5 The University recognizes the right of Student Clubs engage in Partisan Political Activities provided that:
  - a. they do not use University funds to do so
  - b. they comply with any applicable University, or SA policies, guidelines, or standards
  - c. they do not use University Resources to solicit Political Donations or for fundraising

**4. Political Donations**

- 4.1 University Resources cannot be used to make Political Donations.
- 4.2 The University is prohibited from donating to any provincial political party or candidate under the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act (Alberta). The University will not donate or contribute funds or University Resources to any Partisan Political Activity or any political party or candidate. This prohibition includes indirectly contributing funds by providing space, providing services in kind, or providing other University Resources at a subsidized cost for Partisan Political Activities.

**5. Third-Party Advertisers**

- 5.1 University Resources cannot be used to establish an entity that would be required to register as a third-party under the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act (Alberta).

**6. Time off for Partisan Political Activity**

- 6.1 Appointees and Employees requesting time off for Partisan Political Activity are required to follow the provisions of the standard processes for requesting and approving paid or unpaid time off (i.e., vacation request, leave of absence).

**7. Candidates for Election**

- 7.1 University Resources cannot be used to make Political Donations.
- 7.2 The University recognizes the right of Appointees, Employees, and Students to seek election to a Political Office provided they do not use University Resources to do so.
- 7.3 Where an Appointee or Employee seeks election to a Political Office the Appointee or Employee must notify the member of the Senior Leadership Team to whom they report of their candidacy to manage any real, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest that may arise from being a candidate in an election.

**8. Elected to Political Office**

- 8.1 Academic Staff who are elected to Political Office will comply with the relevant sections of the Collective Agreement.
- 8.2 Appointees and Employees who are elected to Political Office will take a leave of absence if granted by the University, or resign their position at the University.

**9. Election Signs and Posters**

- 9.1 Election signs and posters for partisan political candidates, political parties, or referenda may be placed on the publicly available bulletin boards inside University buildings. Election signs or posters in other public spaces on campus may be subject to removal.
- 9.2 Requests to display election signs and posters must be submitted to and approved by senior leadership team with advice from Human Resources.

**10. Application of this Policy**

- 10.1 Human Resources will provide advice to senior leadership team members concerning the application of this Policy.

**11. Communications During an Election Period**

- 11.1 The University will allow regular advertising of our programming during the 28-day election period provided we do not reference any political party, previous government sponsorship or potential government sponsorship. The restriction is not limited to paid advertisements and includes any publication of information about programs or activities unless an exemption applies. The University will not draw attention to an event, product, service, or idea in a public medium during the election period unless an exemption applies. This includes all communications across websites, social media, and print publications.
- 11.2 The University will not use the name, voice, or image of a candidate who was a member of the Legislative Assembly immediately before the issuance of the writ in any advertising or publication about programs or activities. The name, voice or image cannot be used in any publication, including those publications that are otherwise permissible during the election period as a result of an exemption. Accordingly, both existing and new publications about programs or activities that include photographs or the name of past MLAs seeking re-election, are prohibited.