

A Primer on Political Activities

Brad Trahan, Assistant General Counsel

brad.trahan@uncc.edu

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Agenda

- ▶ University Activities
- ▶ Employee Activities
- ▶ Potential Consequences

University Activities

Permissible Activities

- ▶ Voter Education
- ▶ Issue Advocacy
- ▶ Business with Candidates
- ▶ Providing Information
- ▶ Candidates on Campus

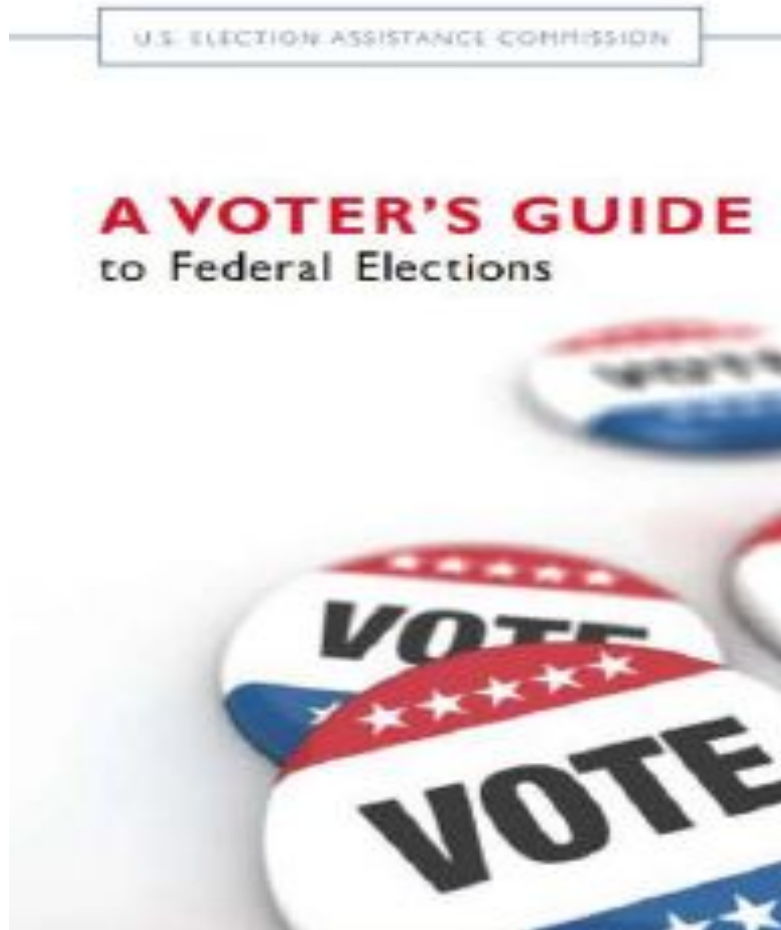
University Permissible Activities

Voter Education and Registration

- ▶ Voter Guides, Candidate Questionnaires, and other Voter Education Activities
- ▶ Voter Registration, Polling, “Get-Out-The-Vote”
- ▶ Websites and Online Information

University Permissible Activities

Voter Education: Voter Guides Voter Education Activities



- ▶ Guides made available to the public
- ▶ Contains no editorial opinion
- ▶ No implied bias or candidate preference
- ▶ Wide range of subjects

University Permissible Activities

Voter Education: Voter Registration, Conducting Polls,
Get-Out-The-Vote

- ▶ Registration: Cannot target voters of a particular party or help a specific candidate
- ▶ Polls: Questions must be framed neutrally and accepted polling techniques must be used
- ▶ Get Out The Vote: Cannot favor specific party or candidate

University Permissible Activities

Voter Education: Websites and Online Information



- ▶ UNC Charlotte can provide links to a candidate's official website, but must have links to all candidates for that office
- ▶ Links must be presented in a neutral manner
- ▶ Online information must be neutral and provide information on all candidates for that office

University Permissible Activities

Issue Advocacy

- ▶ UNC Charlotte may engage in issue advocacy. This is limited to non-political public policy issues
- ▶ Distinct from endorsing a political or partisan cause
- ▶ Ex: Advocating for a more sustainable future



University Permissible Activities

Issue Advocacy

CAUTION

- ▶ UNC Charlotte cannot:
 - ▶ Identify candidates
 - ▶ Express approval or disapproval for a candidate
 - ▶ Make a specific reference to voting

University Permissible Activities

Business with Candidates

- ▶ Goods and services may be sold, leased, or provided to candidates if they are made available to every candidate
- ▶ The goods or services must generally also be made available to the public
- ▶ Charges and fees must be fair-market value and usual rates to the public
- ▶ Activities must be ordinary ongoing activities, not specifically created for candidates

University Permissible Activities

Information and Data

- ▶ UNC Charlotte may provide factual information and data to political candidates
- ▶ UNC Charlotte should make it clear that the University will not be identified with any candidate or political party and the data must be made equally available to all candidates
- ▶ *Examples include: research and economic data, or educational information on other topics*

University Permissible Activities

Hosting Candidates on Campus

- ▶ Debates:
 - ▶ Non-Partisan Panel
 - ▶ Broad Topics
 - ▶ Equal Opportunity
- ▶ Campaigns:
 - ▶ Equal Opportunity
 - ▶ No Fund Raising
 - ▶ Non-Affiliated Groups



University Permissible Activities

Hosting [Non]Candidates on Campus

- ▶ Political candidates may speak on campus if:
 - ▶ Expert in a non-political field
 - ▶ Holds/Held public office
 - ▶ Distinguished military, legal, or public service career

**No campaign activity can occur*

**Clearly state that the individual is not appearing as a political candidate and refrain from mentioning upcoming election*

Prohibited University Activities

- ▶ Endorse
 - ▶ UNC Charlotte cannot endorse any political party, candidate, or cause
- ▶ Participate
 - ▶ UNC Charlotte cannot participate or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office
- ▶ Lobbying
 - ▶ UNC Charlotte cannot engage in substantial quantities of lobbying for purposes of influencing legislation

Note: Contact Office of the Chancellor and Special Assistant to the Chancellor for Constituent Relations for questions about lobbying activity

Permissible Employee Activities

Participation and Teaching

- ▶ Employees can participate in civic activities...
 - ▶ Registering to vote
 - ▶ Becoming a candidate (follow University Policies)
 - ▶ Solicit, accept, receive, and make campaign contributions
 - ▶ Participate in elections
 - ▶ Participate in political campaigns or organizations

However...

***All activities must be conducted independently from the employee's
UNC Charlotte employment***

Permissible Employee Activities

Participation and Teaching

- ▶ Teaching
 - ▶ Permissible activities also include teaching, inquiry, and classroom discussion on political issues within the subject matter of the course



Prohibited Employee Activities

- ▶ Employment Time
- ▶ UNC Charlotte Resources
- ▶ Perception
- ▶ Misuse of Authority

Prohibited Employee Activities

Use of University Time

- ▶ An employee cannot participate in a political activity, including managing a campaign, during a period of time they s/he is expected to perform services for UNC Charlotte



Prohibited Employee Activities

Use of University Resources

- ▶ Employees cannot use UNC Charlotte resources for any political activity

In other words...

Prohibited Employee Activities

Use of University Resources

- ▶ UNC Charlotte Vehicles = NO
- ▶ UNC Charlotte Office Mailings = NO
- ▶ UNC Charlotte Printers/Scanners/Copiers = NO
- ▶ UNC Charlotte Email = NO

Prohibited Employee Activities

Perception

- ▶ Employees must make it clear that they are participating as an individual and not on behalf of the University



Prohibited Employee Activities

Perception – Senior Officers

Senior Officers at UNC Charlotte (Chancellor, Provost, Vice Chancellors, Deans) cannot:

- ▶ Solicit, accept, or receive financial contributions from other persons or organizations on behalf of a candidate
- ▶ Endorse or oppose a candidate for a partisan political office in a political advertisement, broadcast, campaign literature, or similar material

Prohibited Employee Activities

Misuse of Authority

- ▶ Employees may not inappropriately use their authority to secure support for, or opposition to, any person or issue in any election
- ▶ Employees cannot use their authority to coerce, solicit, or compel another UNC Charlotte employee to support, contribute, or oppose a political candidate, party, or cause

Enforcement

- ▶ Loss of Tax Exempt Status
- ▶ Excise Tax Liability
- ▶ Criminal Misdemeanor
- ▶ Policy Violations can lead to University Disciplinary Action



Resources are available at...



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