

Student Lobbying, Political and Campaign Activities Policy

Philosophy

In keeping with its educational and service mission, and its desire to promote discussion of and participation in political and civic issues, Xavier University encourages and supports the involvement of students in government and political affairs. However, lobbying and political campaign-related activities are limited by policies and practices that must be followed in accordance with the Internal Revenue Code and Federal Election Commission regulations.

Xavier University is a private non-profit educational institution and is governed by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Consistent with this section of the Internal Revenue Code, Xavier University may not participate, directly or indirectly, in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. Xavier students and recognized student organizations may, however, participate in political activities as described in these policies, or as otherwise permitted by the Internal Revenue Service. Within these restrictions, Xavier University provides an academic environment which encourages free expression and civic discourse in order to enrich and invigorate the educational experience for all members of the campus community.

The scope of this policy is limited to students and student organizations. Lobbying and political activities concerning faculty and staff are addressed in a separate policy.

Policy

Individual Xavier students, recognized student organizations, and students engaged in class assignments have the opportunity to participate in certain kinds of lobbying or political campaign-related activities. Prior to participating in any such activities, students and/or recognized student organizations should contact the Office of Student Involvement to ensure their planned activities fall within these and other University policies and guidelines. The Student Handbook and all other applicable University policies and procedures continue to apply for any such activities.

Supervision of students and student organizations engaging in political activities is vested, in the first instance, in the Senior Director for Student Affairs, who shall consult with the Director of Government Relations in case of questions involving the implementation or interpretation of these policies.

Students are encouraged to express their individual and collective political views provided they understand and make clear they are not speaking for or in the name of Xavier University. In so doing, each individual should make it clear that any references to his or her membership in the University community is for identification purposes only, and he or she is not acting on behalf of or speaking for, or with the endorsement of, the University.

Specific Activities

The following is a list of common types of lobbying and political campaign-related activities in which recognized student organizations and student engaged in a class project may participate. This list is not meant to be comprehensive, but should provide examples of the types of activities that may be permitted. All activities are subject to interpretation by the Senior Director of Student Affairs, in consultation with the Director of Government Relations.

1. Candidate Appearances, Forums, Debates

- a. Recognized student organizations may receive permission to provide speaking opportunities to public officials and/or candidates for public office. The appearance of a public official or candidate should be for an educational or informational talk to the University community and must be sponsored by a recognized student organization. All such appearances must be approved at least two weeks in advance through the Office of Student Involvement, in consultation with the Director of Government Relations, and in accordance with the University Protocol for Campus Public Speakers and Events. Such appearances shall be limited to speeches, question-and-answer sessions or similar communications in an academic setting and are not to be conducted as campaign rallies or events.
- b. Recognized student organizations may receive permission to sponsor public forums or debates to which public officials and/or legally qualified candidates for a public office (or for the nomination of a particular party) are invited and given equal access and opportunity to speak.
- c. Recognized student organizations are not permitted to use University or student activity fee dollars in support of clearly partisan speeches or candidate appearances. Note: Students, recognized student organizations, or students engaged in a class project are not permitted to pay a candidate for public office for a speaking engagement or appearance.

2. Candidate Endorsements and Campaigning

- a. Students, recognized student organizations, or students engaged in a class project may endorse a political party, candidate for public office, and/or take a position on a ballot issue.
- b. Students, recognized student organizations, or students engaged in a class project may participate in campaign-related activities for a candidate for public office, political party, or ballot issue.
- c. Students, recognized student organizations, or students engaged in a class project may not place signs or other such fixed exhibits (such as ribbons, flags, banners, or other items) on university property that support or critique a particular candidate for public office, political party, or ballot issue. Policies related to residence hall rooms and apartments are available from the Office of Residence Life.

- a. Students, recognized student organizations, or students engaged in a class project may not engage in on-campus solicitation for or against particular candidate for public office, political party, or ballot issue.
- b. Recognized student organizations or students engaged in a class project may host events or activities in support of a political party, candidate for public office, or ballot issue. Such activities shall not interfere with the rights of others or with other University functions.

3. Financial Support

- a. Recognized student organizations or students engaged in a class project may receive permission to engage in fundraising activities to support a candidate for public office, political party or ballot issue, and/or may donate directly to a candidate for public office, political party, or ballot issue provided that no University or student activity fee dollars are donated in support of a candidate for public office, political party, or ballot issue. These activities are subject to approval via the Fundraising Policy.
- b. Any funds or contributions for public officials, candidates for public office, political parties, or ballot issues may not be solicited in the name of Xavier University.
- c. Students and/or recognized student organizations are not permitted to use University or student activity fee dollars in support of clearly partisan activities. For questions about student activity fee use, consult with the Senior Director for Student Affairs in the Office of Student Involvement.

4. Use of University Facilities

- a. Recognized student organizations may receive permission to use available University facilities for partisan and/or non-partisan political purposes, provided that such organizations make the necessary arrangements with appropriate University officials; pay the normal costs, if any, for such use (including any increased security costs); and recognize their obligation to abide by all applicable University rules and regulations.
- b. Announcements or advertisements for political events using University facilities must clearly indicate the following:
 - i. Xavier University does not support or oppose candidates for public office;
 - ii. The opinions expressed are not those of Xavier University;
 - iii. The name of the sponsoring organizations.
- c. Such announcements shall be made at the beginning and end of an event.

5. Use of University Resources

- a. University resources (including email/mail distribution, email/ mailing lists, scans, photocopying, orders through FedEx office account, websites, social media, student organization mailboxes, etc.) may not be used by or on behalf of an outside organization or outside individual whose purpose is to further the cause of a candidate for office, a ballot issue, or a political party. To the extent such services are available for purchase by non-Xavier customers; they may be purchased at the prevailing rates by candidates or parties. No University office (including student organization mailboxes) should be used as a return address for partisan or non-partisan political mailings.
- b. Neither Xavier University's name, nor Xavier University insignia may appear on stationery or any other material used or intended for partisan and/or non-partisan political purposes.

6. Voter Education

- a. Recognized student organizations or students engaged in a class project may conduct partisan and/or non-partisan training programs designed to increase public understanding of the electoral process or to encourage citizens to become involved in the process.
- b. Recognized student organizations or students engaged in a class project may circulate questionnaires or conduct public opinion polls. Such activities should not be skewed to the advantage or disadvantage of individual candidates, political parties, or ballot issues.

7. Voter Registration

- a. Recognized student organizations or students engaged in a class project may organize or participate in voter registration activities, subject to the requirements of the Hamilton County Board of Elections.
- b. Voter registration activities may include partisan and/or non-partisan materials.
- c. Voter registration activities should not include the presence of a candidate for office.

8. Voter Transportation

- a. Recognized student organizations may provide transportation for student voters to polling locations. Such transportation must be available for any eligible student voter, regardless of political affiliation or interest.

Approval Process

Recognized student organizations must register their lobbying or political campaign related activity with the University through the Office of Student Involvement. Individual students should consult with the Senior Director for Student Affairs regarding the appropriate protocol.

Appeals Process

The Office of Student Involvement reserves the right to deny the approval of any request. To appeal the denial of a request, please contact the Office of Student Involvement at (513) 745-3004 or xuinvolvement@xavier.edu.

Violations of Policy

Violation of this policy may result in the following actions taken singularly or in combination:

- Immediate termination of the event
- Payment for any labor, repair, or replacement costs incurred because of the violation
- Forfeiture of the use of the space for a stated period of time
- Conduct proceedings in accordance with an individual/group's University classification
- Referral to other campus offices as deemed appropriate

Alleged violations may be referred to the Associate Provost for Student Affairs and/or designee.

Policy Review and Amendment

This policy is subject to annual review and amendment based on suggestions received during the year. When conditions warrant, a review committee may be called together to develop recommendations.

Contact

Please contact the Senior Director for Student Affairs in the Office of Student Involvement with any questions.