UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

University Policy
University Procedure
Operating Standard
Guideline/Form

Partisan Political Activities Policy

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Approval Authority Board of Governors	
Implementation Authority Associate Vice-President (Government Relations)	
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1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect the non-partisan status of the University and to set out the University's expectations for Academic Staff Member, Appointee, Employee, Postdoctoral Scholar and Student participation in Partisan Political Activity.

2 Scope

This policy applies to Partisan Political Activity by Academic Staff Members, Appointees, Employees, Postdoctoral Scholars, 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.

3 Definitions

In this policy:

a) "Academic Staff Member" means an individual who is engaged to work for the University and is identified as an academic staff member under Article 1 of the collective agreement between the Faculty Association of the University of Calgary and the Governors of the University of Calgary in effect at the relevant time.

b) "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, clinical appointments, and visiting researchers and scholars. For clarity, Appointee includes Postdoctoral Scholars whose work is affiliated with the University through a letter of appointment.

c) "Employee" means an individual, other than an Academic Staff Member, who is engaged to work for the University under an employment contract. For clarity,

Employees include Postdoctoral Scholars who are engaged to work for the University under an employment contract.

d) "GSA" means the Graduate Students' Association of the University of Calgary.

e) "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 Academic Staff Member's or Employee's scope of employment.

f) "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.

g) "Political Office" means an elected role in government, in any jurisdiction.

h) "Postdoctoral Scholar" means an individual who has completed a doctoral degree and is carrying out research at the University under the direction or mentorship of a supervising Academic Staff Member.

i) "Student" means an individual registered in a University course or program of study.

j) "Student Club" means a registered SU club, or a graduate student group registered with the GSA.

k) "SU" means The Students' Union, the University of Calgary.

l) "University" means the University of Calgary.

m) "University Community" means all Academic Staff Members, Appointees, Employees, Postdoctoral Scholars, and Students.

n) "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 games, digital advertising, web pages and websites, social media, data and databases, email marketing, and electronic books.

o) "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.

4 Policy Statement

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

4.2 The University recognizes the right of Students to participate in Partisan Political Activities provided they do not use University Resources to do so.

4.3 The University recognises the right of Academic Staff Members, 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. Academic Staff Members, 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.

4.4 Academic Staff Members, 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.

4.5 The University recognizes the right of Student Clubs to engage in Partisan Political Activities provided that:

a) they do not use University funds to do so;
b) they comply with any applicable University, SU or GSA policies, guidelines, or standards; and
c) they do not use University Resources to solicit Political Donations or for fundraising.

Political Donations

4.6 University Resources cannot be used to make Political Donations.

4.7 The University is prohibited from donating to any provincial political party or candidate under the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act* (Alberta). The University recognizes its duty as a public entity to ensure the responsible use of public funds (including funds held in trust by the University) and University Resources and to ensure the non-partisan position of the University. Therefore, 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.

Third Party Advertisers

4.8 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).

Time off for Partisan Political Activity

4.9 Academic Staff Members, Appointees, and Employees requesting time off for Partisan Political Activity are required to follow the provisions of any applicable collective agreement or the standard processes for requesting and approving paid or unpaid time off (i.e., vacation request, leave of absence).

Candidates for Election

4.10 The University recognizes the right of Academic Staff Members, Appointees, Employees, and Students to seek election to a Political Office provided they do not use University Resources to do so.

4.11 Where an Academic Staff Member, Appointee, or Employee seeks election to a Political Office the Academic Staff Member, 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.

Elected to Political Office

4.12 Academic Staff Members who are elected to Political Office will comply with the relevant sections of the Collective Agreement.

4.13 Appointees and Employees who are elected to Political Office will take a leave of absence if one is provided for in the applicable collective agreement or otherwise granted by the University, or resign their position at the University.

Election Signs and Posters

4.14 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.

Application of this Policy

4.15 The Office of the General Counsel will provide advice to senior leadership team members concerning the application of this Policy.

5 Related Policies

Code of Conduct
Use of University Facilities for Non-Academic Purposes Policy

6 References

Election Act, RSA 2000, c E-1
Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act, RSA 2000, c E-2
Canada Elections Act, SC 2000, c 9
Local Authorities Election Act, RSA 2000, c L-21

7 History

June 17, 2015	Approved.
July 1, 2015	Effective.
May 15, 2018	Editorial Revision. Updated “Student” definition.
January 1, 2020	Editorial Revision. Updated format and links.
November 28, 2022	Revised.