

<p><b>Political Activity Policy</b> (Originally part of HR Manual-Pages 59-60-but was pulled out as a separate policy)</p>	<p><b>BOT Approved: November 19, 2019</b></p>
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**PURPOSE:**

The College is committed to free and open discussion of ideas and opinions. As part of its dedication to active citizenship, Garrett College encourages students, faculty, and staff to exercise their civic rights to participate as individuals in the political process. However, Garrett College is supported by public funds, and as a whole cannot support or endorse a candidate for public office or an election issue.

**POLICY:**

The College is legally prohibited from endorsing candidates for political office or making any contribution of money, goods, or services to candidates. It is important, therefore, that no person intentionally or unintentionally causes the College to make such an endorsement or contribution. Therefore, the College prohibits employees from using college time or property to promote, elect or defeat a candidate or election issue. However, student organizations that follow college guidelines may be involved in political activities on campus (such as Student Government Association, College Democrats, College Republicans, etc.).

**PROCEDURES:**

**General**

The College as an institution of higher learning has an educational reason to inform both employees and students about local, state, and federal issues. Information sessions must be conducted in a fair, open, nonpartisan manner, offering diverse views.

**Employees**

All College employees have the right to free political expression and to participate, as individuals, in politics or political campaigns. College employees engaged in political activity shall make it clear that their actions are an expression of their own individual feelings and do not represent the College's position as an institution. While employees are encouraged and expected to assume full citizenship responsibilities by taking an active part in issues, platform development, voting, etc., they shall do this as individuals and not during times they are expected to be performing College responsibilities. Employees may as individuals choose to become even more actively involved in the political process as candidates or public supporters of candidates, with the exception of the President of the college. Employees may also serve as an advisor to a sanctioned student political club. However, while serving as

a club advisor, employees must be careful to maintain professionalism and respect their primary obligation to the College. Therefore, an employee shall not:

- Engage in partisan political activity (i.e. fundraising, copying or printing campaign materials, soliciting political support, etc.) while on the job during working hours, perform services for political candidates using the resources of the College (e.g. copying materials, borrowing or lending technology, etc.), or be obligated to contribute to an election campaign, political party or political club or to render political service.
- Use any College property, resources, or symbols (e.g., logo, signage) in any political campaign materials or activities.
- Solicit funds for political purposes on campus. No reprisals may occur against any employee or student who does not accept an invitation to a political event or contribute money to a candidate, or render political service.
- Intimidate, threaten, or coerce or attempt to intimidate, threaten, or coerce any other employee for the purpose of interfering with the right of such person to vote, to make contributions, or engage in political activity as such person may choose.

### **Faculty**

With regard to political expression in the classroom, faculty members are expected to follow the Principles of Academic Freedom as published by the American Association of University Professors: which suggests, the teacher is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing his/her subject, but should be careful not to introduce teaching material which has no relation to his/her subject. Further, he/she should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, [and] should show respect for the opinions of others.

### **Reporting of Grievances/Violations**

The Office of Equity and Compliance serves as a method of recourse to those, be they student, faculty, or staff, who believe that a particular action on the part of a College member has violated accepted or stated institutional practices and standards. Any concerns or alleged violations of this policy may be directed to the Director of Equity and Compliance and addressed in accordance with the Equity Grievance Policy.

### **Penalties for Violations**

Any employee found in violation of any provision of this policy shall be disciplined in accordance with College policies and procedures.