

**Political and Public Advocacy Examples for Faculty and Staff****Permissible Activities**

1. Employees participate in a “Day of Discussion” filled with town-hall sessions and teach-ins on campus to discuss important public policy issues and potential solutions.
  - This is permissible, so long as the employees’ participation does not interfere with the fulfillment of their responsibilities to the University.
2. A group of Princeton alumni (including some employees) plan to wear an orange version of the famous “pussy” hat from the Women’s March on Washington at Reunions and use personal email addresses to spread the word.
  - The donning of these hats does not constitute prohibited partisan political activity.
  - Staff soliciting other employees to support this initiative should do so on their own time and using their own resources (e.g., their personal e-mail accounts).
  - Supervisors should not solicit their subordinates even from their personal e-mail accounts.
3. Employee has a bumper sticker supporting a political candidate on their personal vehicle parked in West Garage.
  - This is permissible. It is on the employee’s own property and is, by and large, outside the course of the employee’s regular work and responsibilities for the University.

**Impermissible Activities**

4. Member of a labor union on campus sends partisan political messages (unrelated to working conditions) from their Princeton email account to other union employees.
  - It is NOT permissible to use University resources in connection with partisan political activities.
  - Non-managerial employees may, however, use the University’s email system to engage in discussions about the terms and conditions of employment during nonworking time, which may encompass certain political messages.
5. Professor hosts fundraising reception at their home for a political candidate and sends invitations to peers from their University email address.
  - While the professor is free to host the fundraising reception at their home and to invite peers, they should not use University resources (such as their work email address) to distribute invitations. Inviting subordinates, even from a personal email account, may be perceived as coercive and is strongly discouraged.

6. Department manager displays a campaign poster supporting a political candidate on the outside of their office door.
  - This is NOT permissible. Staff who wish to engage in partisan political activities must do so on their own time, outside the course of their regular work and responsibilities for the University, and with their own resources.
  
7. University administrator is asked by a student group to sign a petition calling on people to suspend their activities for a day to discuss public policy issues and the political landscape.
  - Employees suspending their activities for a full day violates the requirement in *Rights, Rules, Responsibilities* 1.5.2. (8) that advocacy activities “must not interfere with the fulfillment of [employees’] responsibilities to the University or be conducted at the expense of the University.” The administrator should not encourage employees to violate University policy.
  - Also, by signing the petition, the administrator is suggesting that the University endorses the suspension of work activities.
  - It is permissible for University administrators to sign petitions, as long as their University affiliation is used only for identification purposes and does not suggest that the University endorses the petition.
  
8. Department manager sends emails from their Princeton email account inviting colleagues to participate in an event that has the goal of raising visibility and funds for a health advocacy organization.
  - Although it is not partisan political activity, the effort constitutes solicitation and is thus impermissible for staff members under HR Policy 5.3.8.
  - Faculty and staff who wish to solicit contributions or support for public policy initiatives or similar causes are encouraged do so on their own time and using their own resources.
  - Also, individuals in positions of authority must take care not to use or be perceived as using their positions to coerce their subordinates (whether students, junior faculty, or staff) to contribute to or support a particular position on a public policy or civic issue.
  
9. Director of department emails colleagues from their Princeton email account encouraging them to contact federal legislators to urge them to vote against federal budget cuts which may impact the work of the department.
  - Lobbying emails should not be sent from University email accounts unless coordinated by the University’s Office of Government Affairs in Washington D.C. However, faculty and staff may lobby in their individual capacities on their own time and using their own resources.

### **Inadvisable Activities**

10. Department Chair is asked by students to sign and circulate a petition asking the University not to invest in certain stock.
  - Circulating the petition to other employees via University email is inadvisable. Faculty who wish to solicit support for public policy initiatives or similar causes should do so on their own time and using their own resources (e.g., their personal email accounts).

- Department Chairs are in positions of authority and must take care not to use or be perceived as using their positions to coerce their subordinates to contribute to or support a particular candidate, political party, or position on a public policy or civic issue. A Chair's circulation of the petition (whether or not University email is used) may be viewed as coercive when forwarded or distributed to subordinates.

**Note:** *The information in this document is for your general information and education only and does not constitute legal advice. Please feel free to contact the Office of the General Counsel with specific legal questions regarding candidate appearances at University events.*